

A KNIGHT OF COLUMBIA



GENERAL · CHARLES · KING



hbl, stx

PZ 3.K58Kn

Knight of Columbia;



3 9153 00580149 5

PZ/3/K58/kn

57

27

a



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

A KNIGHT OF COLUMBIA

H. V. Hall

V

H. V. d



‘THE GLEAMING BAYONET WAS CLOSE AT HIS BELT BUCKLE’

A KNIGHT OF COLUMBIA

A Story of the War

BY

GENERAL CHARLES KING

AUTHOR OF "AN APACHE PRINCESS," "A DAUGHTER OF
THE SIOUX," "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FORT
FRAYNE," "AN ARMY WIFE," ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

GEORGE GIBBS

NEW YORK

THE HOBART COMPANY

1904

COPYRIGHT, 1904
BY
THE HOBART COMPANY.

*A Knight of
Columbia.*

*Published
March 25, 1904.*

CONTENTS

	CHAPTER I.	
CHUMS,		9
	CHAPTER II.	
ASSAULT THE FIRST,		25
	CHAPTER III.	
DOUBTS AND FEARS,		39
	CHAPTER IV.	
A STAB IN THE BACK,		50
	CHAPTER V.	
AWAY TO THE FRONT,		63
	CHAPTER VI.	
TROOPER REX,		76
	CHAPTER VII.	
A RIDE OF MISHAPS,		91
	CHAPTER VIII.	
WHAT THE LETTERS SAID,		105
	CHAPTER IX.	
STRANGE WITNESSES AT BULL RUN,		117
	CHAPTER X.	
STRANGE SYMPTOMS AT BROOKSIDE,		132
	CHAPTER XI.	
THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET,		147
	CHAPTER XII.	
A DOUBLE MYSTERY,		163

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XIII.

DISGUISE,	176
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE,	183
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

COURT-MARTIAL,	200
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FACE IN THE FIRELIGHT,	216
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SENTRY'S POTION,	228
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN PERILOUS PATHS,	240
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LEAP OF A YEAR,	253
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX.

AN OMINOUS DAY,	267
---------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WRECK OF THE RIGHT WING,	279
----------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

SUMMONED HOME,	297
--------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE VOLCANO UNDER THE CITY,	311
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

REVELATIONS,	324
------------------------	-----

L'ENVOI.

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE.
FRONTISPIECE	
“TURNING THE KEY IN THE LOCK, SHE TUGGED AT THE HEAVY DOOR”	21
“THE GLEAMING BAYONET WAS CLOSE AT HIS BELT BUCKLE”	99
“HER LITTLE WHITE HAND, WHITER IN THE MOONLIGHT, SWEEPING THE STRINGS OF HER GUITAR”	136
“THREE DAYS LATER THEY WERE TROTTING BRISKLY ALONG AN OLD PLANK ROAD”	232
“WITH ONE MADDENING, JOYOUS, VENGEFUL CHEER” . . .	265
“THE GLOVED HAND WENT BACK, NOT OUT, TO GET THE SWAYING FORM”	322
“FOR A MOMENT NEITHER SPOKE”	341

A KNIGHT OF COLUMBIA

CHAPTER I

CHUMS

“**R**EX, old boy, it was great—great! Just listen to 'em!” and the speaker, in the silken gown of a Columbia student, stood at the wings, grasping the hand of the classmate who had just left the stage and now leaned against the canvas, trembling slightly with excitement, while a great audience that had risen to its feet was cheering enthusiastically—wildly. “They will have you,” continued the speaker, “See, Prex is beckoning!” and, releasing the imprisoned hands and with a determined push, he sent his chum, half dazed, half delighted, back to the footlights, and the uproar in the vast theatre redoubled. Even the President and the semi-circular array of the black-gowned faculty were applauding vehemently. A sea of waving handkerchiefs and eager, radiant faces greeted the young graduate as he bowed his thanks and acknowledgments, then strove again to escape to the wings, but they shouted the more and compelled his return, while from aloft a great garrison flag, the scarlet and white, the spangled field of blue, came floating slowly,

downward and the doubled orchestra crashed suddenly into the strains of The Star Spangled Banner. The President, springing to his feet, was waving his tasseled cap over his grand old gray head; even the staidest among the professors seemed carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, and then, as though to cap the climax, two young men with the buttons, belt and sash of the national uniform visible beneath the parted silk of their college gowns, were fairly rushed forth upon the stage by a mob of cheering classmates, and, blushing, confused, yet thrilling with the glory of their greeting, obeyed the shouts of the alumni and undergraduates in the vast audience to "get into line," and stood one on either side of the fortunate orator, facing the grandest assemblage ever seen up to that time in the Academy of Music. It was Commencement Day. The Greek salutatory, the Latin ode, the English poem, the Valedictory, all had smoothly rolled forth into space—and oblivion—each appropriately rewarded by the assembled throng, wondering even as it smote its kidded palms, what it all might be about, and then, along among the last, at the time when all but the immediate kindred of the speakers and perhaps one girl apiece, were wishing the speaking well over, the President, in the same half perfunctory tone, announced Mr. Reginald Ingraham, whose theme was to be The Menace to the Flag. The occupants of one proscenium box stopped chatting. The rest of the mammoth audience welcomed the new-comer with the customary hand-clap without either seeing or stopping. It was not until the tall young man with wavy brown hair and keen

blue eyes had been speaking full five minutes, that other sound than that of his own voice had gradually ceased and people were looking and listening—not until then, either, had he permitted himself so much as a single glance toward that certain proscenium box, but now one swift look flashed thither as he paused to let the first ripple of applause subside, and a radiant face, a beautiful face, fixed full upon him, met the sudden message from his eyes, and with interest returned it. Five minutes more and applause and cheering followed fast on every paragraph—ten, and the dome was ringing with wild acclamation. In a thrilling climax he had carried them to the wooded slopes of the Potomac where another flag, in the same vivid hues of scarlet and white and blue, was fluttering along the Southern shore, and then in prophecy had pictured the future of that alien banner, of the sons of the South who bore it, of the men of the Union who were destined to overwhelm it, and closed his fifteen minutes address with a peroration burning with patriotism and courage and hope; and men and women, old and young, his thousand odd of friends and hearers, seemed lifted off their feet with enthusiasm and delight. “Whoever dreamed Rex Ingraham could make such a speech!” said Whiting, head of the class. “Whoever *began* to know what he could do or could not do!” said Burnham, his inseparable chum and unneeded prompter. The manuscript of a now famous speech had fallen to the floor, forgotten, as at last Ingraham, with brimming eyes and trembling hands was permitted to withdraw from the stage, to be again seized by Burnham and

violently shaken and vehemently hugged, to be passed round through a surging throng of classmates, who had swarmed upon the forbidden regions of the mammoth stage and were fairly pulling or pounding him to limp and quivering shapelessness, when rescue came at last in the person of Burnham and a whispered word. "Cut loose—they want you at the box."

And if ever woman's eyes spoke welcome, congratulation, pride, rejoicing, admiration and—more, those wonderful dark eyes of Editha Raynor told their tale as Ingraham entered the crowded box. She was waiting and watching. She whirled upon him, with both white hands—slim, richly jeweled hands—eagerly extended, and words of praise leaping to her ripe, red lips. The clasp of those hands thrilled him to the very core. The fire of those glorious eyes burned into his dizzy brain. The music of her voice, even more than the fervor of her words, set his heart to tumultuous throbbing. He bent down over her, his blue eyes filled with infinite longing and almost incredulous, yet maddening, hope, and with vague, nameless uneasiness. For a moment he could neither see nor hear that others—many others—were clustered about him, adding their congratulations and praise. They smiled significantly at each other. They even drew aside that the leveled *lorgnons* in scores of dainty hands all over the house might have unimpeded view of this meeting between the hero of the hour and a leading belle and beauty of metropolitan society—Editha, daughter of a house and name old, almost, as that of Peter Stuyvesant

and proud as the Son of the Morning. It was Editha herself who recalled him to earth and a realization of his surroundings. "Here are ever so many more who wish to add their praise. Mrs. Fairbanks, of course, is impatience itself." (Bows and bobs and murmurs.) "Miss DeRuyter, Mr. Ingraham." (More bobs and inarticulations.) "Miss Satterlee, Mr. Ingraham. Mr. Post you know, Mr. Lansing you know, Mr. Webb you ought to know. Mr. Burnham, my kinsman, everybody knows. He has been Mr. Ingraham's inseparable for long years—his *Fidus Achates*, isn't it? I never could be sure of the Latin names you had for each other. Now, Rex," with a sidelong sweep of the ample silken skirts, "you are to sit right here, sir, and tell me when you found time to write and memorize that magnificent speech—and never refer to it to a single soul."

He dropped into the chair Webb had vacated in his favor. He was glad enough to sit. The world was still dancing some solemn giddy-go-round. Auditorium and audience seemed slowly revolving about him. The clasp of her hands had only served to quicken the revolutions. Burnham had plunged into lively debate with Mrs. Fairbanks. Post and Lansing were sidling strategically for the door. The girls had turned in low-toned chatter on Webb. To one and all a situation unheard before that day, and undreamed of up to the moment of Ingraham's address, had become entirely obvious at the instant of his entrance. There is one page in the book of life a woman can read in the dark. What would have been the height

of discourtesy under other circumstances became the acme of kindness now. Politely they turned their backs on the murmuring pair. In its attitude toward lovers Society, when sympathetic, is only outclassed by the savage. The one thing to which the Indian is studiously blind is love making. Chaska woos Winona in the heart of the village and no man looks, no woman speaks, no boy brother dare spy, no small sister simper. For three minutes of bliss Rex Ingraham was practically alone with the girl he worshipped, then came Kent and Tracy to the front of the box, their uniforms gleaming beneath the glossy silk. There was a lull in the exercises on the stage. "Prex" was about to present the diplomas, with a war speech, to the graduating class, and meantime Helmsmuller with his musicians was thrilling all hearts again with a medley of patriotic airs.

"Rex, we're going to have that speech of yours printed—ten thousand copies for distribution as war literature—send it broadcast over the state," shouted Kent, over the clamor of trombone and cymbal. "Got your outfit yet?"

A quick, wary glance was the answer. Burnham, too, whirled on the speaker, finger on lips. Kent reddened and stammered. He knew well, as did others of the class, that Rex Ingraham was the son of a former partner of John Raynor, a partner who had stood by him in days of struggle and adversity, for Raynor had never been rich. Through George Ingraham's effort and perseverance a large and fairly lucrative practice had been started before the fatal illness which carried off the junior partner

—a practice that in 1860 had become extensive, and Raynor's clients hailed from every cotton-growing state in the Union. His business interests were therefore centered in the South, though the field of his practice was here, mainly in the courts of the Northern metropolis. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," and John Raynor had been outspoken in his opposition to any measures that even remotely resembled coercion of the sister states, until silenced by the guns at Sumter. After that he stood classed as a Southern sympathizer, but one who would be party to no act of disloyalty to the general government—a neutral at a time when he who stood not *for* the flag was against it.

A very unhappy man was Raynor. He had lived up to his income. He had been lavish in charity and generosity. His Southern clients had often been slow in their payments, but paid in full and royally when they were able to pay at all—as most of them were. But now all possibility of collection had been blocked by the outbreak of the war, and Raynor, who had loaded his kith and kin with benefits, now found himself unable to meet his bills—a fact he dare not let his daughter know. Her beloved mother, a native of Mobile, had been dead for years, and Editha, the only surviving child, had been reared in ease and luxury, educated at the most expensive schools, and taught almost everything but economy and self-denial. Her coming-out party the previous winter had been the talk of Gotham for weeks before and after. Her success had been the father's keen delight. Her bills he had paid with laughing ease. And now about the only funds left subject to his order

were some thousands of dollars recently collected for certain of his clients. He had not a thousand of his own.

Rex Ingraham was another of the aged lawyer's comforts as well as beneficiaries. He had sent the lad through an admirable preparatory school and then through college. The senior year of the four was only just come to an end. For more than one reason he had planned to send him for a year or two abroad. Travel would surely benefit. He had purposed that Ingraham should enter the law school eventually and become his partner when granted his diploma. But now—now, where was the money to come from? Raynor had rejoiced in the stanch friendship that had long lived between Rex and Burnham. The latter was the son of a cousin he had dearly loved, and it was more than suspected that Burnham owed all of his apparent prosperity to the bounty of the big-hearted lawyer. To both young men the doors of his handsome home had ever been open, but it was almost as far down town, at Washington Square, as the college was toward Harlem, and he had approved their living together, therefore, in very comfortable quarters on Murray Hill, sure of visits from both young men, visits that had been regular up to the time of their entrance into the senior year and that became frequent and more frequent as fall and winter drew on, for then Editha had "finished" at school and was proudly keeping house for her devoted father.

Just what might result from this proximity of young and impressionable hearts Raynor had failed to consider at the start or later even to conjecture. No sooner was

the November election decided than his troubles began in earnest. State after State seceded. Mail communication was speedily interrupted and later abandoned. So far from settling old accounts many a planter client was importuning him for more money. All through the winter and early spring he had lost no safe opportunity of sending to them whatsoever his agents had been able to collect. But, with the fall of Sumter and the call for troops to defend the capitol, only by the hand of some returning Southerner sure of making his way through the lines, dare he attempt to forward funds in any form. June came with its talk of government confiscation of the property of persons in armed rebellion against the United States, and John Raynor, faithful to the last to his clients' trust, stored upwards of ten thousand dollars in gold, and more in banknotes, in his personal safe, and then sought eagerly for other professional employment among the shippers and merchants of the great city, to which cotton had already almost ceased to come.

He had promised Editha to attend commencement exercises with her, and Rex Ingraham heard with strange relief that at the last moment the prospect of meeting certain Southern gentlemen at Cranston's famous hostelry had taken the father thither, leaving Editha to the care of her aunt, Mrs. Fairbanks. Raynor had striven bravely to keep up appearances in the presence of his beloved child, instead of giving her the blessed joy of sharing his burden and soothing his distress. He had done, as so many fathers err in doing, everything in his power to hide from

his daughter the sore straits in which he found himself. And now, with bankruptcy staring him in the face, he had gone to the New York Hotel, praying that within its sombre, red-brick walls he might find friends or agents of his clients who could aid him to gather a portion at least of the large sums due him in almost every port between Charleston and Indianola, at many a plantation and landing betwixt Memphis and New Orleans. Yet, when the joyous exercises at the Academy were over and the great audience dispersed, with the President's thrilling words still stirring every heart, when the Raynor carriage drove swiftly homeward, bearing Mrs. Fairbanks, her niece and the two chums whose college days were now gone forever, there stood at the massive doorway the butler, with his imperturbable face and his silver tray. "A note, miss, from Mr. Raynor," and the brief words bade the daughter look for him no earlier than ten or eleven o'clock. He might even have to take a night train to Washington.

Ingraham stood with sympathetic eyes, Burnham with averted face, as Editha hurriedly read the brief, unwelcome words. It was so rare a thing, so very rare, for the father to fail to return to her by nightfall, and to-day he had urged that the chums both dine with them, even though there was to be a dance that evening to which the entire graduating class was bidden. Editha had promised a dozen numbers before she left her box at the Academy. Now, in spite of every effort, her soft eyes clouded with anxiety and untold trouble.

"The hotel is but a few squares away," spoke Ingraham,

on the instant. "May I not run round there and see him? There is half an hour before dinner. I can't help thinking that in some way I may be of service."

She looked up quickly, relief and comfort in her beautiful face. "Rex, I declare I—wish you would. I shall feel better satisfied, I think."

"What say you, Fidus? Will you come, too?" asked Ingraham, for Burnham was passing down the marble flagging of the hallway toward the open door of the library.

The answer was hesitating, even constrained.

"Not—this time, Rex, if you don't mind. It's too strongly reb for me after all the glowing Union talk we've heard to-day. I'll read the Post in the library." So saying he turned within the darkened room, and presently the gleam of the shaded gas lamps shone athwart the hallway. Mrs. Fairbanks, her foot upon the lower step, stood as though waiting to bear Editha aloft. There was no hope of another word with her at the moment. One long look was interchanged—the blue eyes with the dark, dark brown; then with springing step the young graduate went bounding down the broad, white marble stairway and strode briskly eastward to Broadway.

Half an hour later when the two ladies again appeared, in readiness for dinner, Burnham was stretched at full length in a great, roomy reclining chair in the library. The Evening Post lay idly on his knee; his eyes were closed, and he was apparently sound asleep. He started up presently at the sound of the swish of their skirts. He

was contrite and confused. "I beg a thousand pardons," said he, "but actually I am nervously worn out. I must have dropped off to sleep before I had been here—five minutes. Where's Rex? Has he not returned?"

Rex had not returned. Nor did he come until soup had been removed. He entered hurriedly, looking a trifle flushed.

"You saw papa?" was Miss Raynor's first question.

"I saw him, yes; but hardly to speak to. He has such an array of followers—all Southern. He saw me finally and cut loose from the crowd about him, and he had been hearing unpleasant things, I should judge, but he thanked me for coming and begged me to say there was no occasion to worry in the least. He had business to transact with certain men who were going South—or trying to—tomorrow. And, Miss Editha, he sends you this note and says I may be your Mercury once more. Then I can have dinner. I'm glad you didn't wait."

Editha took the missive eagerly, tore it open and read it swiftly through. A rather jagged missive it was, written on hotel paper and carelessly folded. A puzzled look was spreading over her face. Presently she glanced up. One thing at least had pleased her:—

"He has heard of your speech already and wishes to read it," said she. "You have the manuscript?"

"I declare," answered Rex, "I've never thought of it since I left the stage. What'd you do with it, Mr. Prompter?"

But the prompter did not know. "As I live, I, too, for-



"TURNING THE KEY IN THE LOCK, SHE TUGGED AT THE HEAVY DOOR"

got it! I think I left it in the wings, close by where I stood to watch you and hear the applause. Somebody has surely picked it up and will restore it. Er—what else does he want?” And he turned as he spoke, looking once more at Editha.

She read aloud. “I send you the key by Rex. Open my safe, take out the two packages marked Philippe Frenier, Baton Rouge. One is quite heavy. Rex will bring them to me at once.”

Together they ascended the stairs and entered the front room on the second floor—Miss Raynor and Ingraham—leaving Mrs. Fairbanks and Burnham at the table. The windows, shades and blinds were all wide open to let in the evening air, for the day had been oppressive. The gas lamps were already twinkling through Washington Square. The dust and the dew were settling on this drowsy nook of the old city. The distant roar and rumble of countless stages over the Russ pavement of Broadway sounded almost dull and soothing. Editha struck a match and lighted the gas in a little alcove where stood a massive old-fashioned safe. Turning the key in the lock, she tugged at the heavy door as it swung slowly open. Within was a second and smaller door that also yielded to her touch. There were three or four drawers and compartments well nigh filled with little canvas sacks, and long packages in stout cartridge paper, tied, sealed and on each was a tag bearing some name. Quickly Miss Raynor turned these one after another to the light, reading aloud the names thereon—Ragsdale, Skipwith, Lamar, Sparrow,

and finally came to one marked Philippe Frenier. It took both her hands to lug out the bag and lift it to Ingraham, who stood behind her. Then came the butler, with his graven-image face and invariable tray, also a card—Captain Armstrong.

“Ask Mrs. Fairbanks if she will see the captain a moment. He has merely called for a book father promised him. He’ll be sure to want to see somebody, and Ned Burnham can’t bear him,” were her murmured words to Rex, as the butler disappeared. She was again burrowing in the depths of the safe, but the search for the long packet proved longer than that for the bag. The gaslight was above the safe and threw no gleam within. “Wait here, Rex,” she said. “I’ll get my candle.” And, hurrying to her own room at the rear of the old-fashioned city house, she was presently heard returning, just as Mrs. Fairbanks’ voice was uplifted from the floor below.

“Editha, just a moment. Captain Armstrong has come in to say good-bye. He is ordered at once to Washington, and goes to-night.”

Leaving her candle on the landing, Miss Raynor ran swiftly down the stairs; deluged their martial visitor with question and comment, even congratulations, before she could say good-bye and god speed; then wished him safe return, all in a breath, over the cordially clasping hands. Then, much to Armstrong’s disappointment, scurried back to the upper floor, and rejoined Ingraham at the safe. The candle showed them several packages, a dozen at least, each one marked with a name, and most of them with the

value of the contents \$500, \$300, \$275, etc., but not one bore the name of Philippe Frenier. Editha's face was paling.

"I helped father stow these in here," said she. "There were seventeen packages besides the little sacks. Now there are," and she counted rapidly, "only thirteen."

"Then I shall go to your father at once and let him know," said Ingraham, his face, too, filling with deep anxiety and dread. "I do not at all like the looks of some of those men with whom he is engaged."

"Yes, go," was her answer, and through gathering tears her dark eyes looked up into his clear-cut, virile face, and in her look there was such a world of trust, appeal and half timid hope that, overcome by the depth of his love for her, as yet unspoken, both hands went out as though to aid and sustain her, and impulsively she took them and felt herself drawn irresistibly toward him. Only for an instant, though. Suddenly he realized her helplessness—her dependence upon him—and, quickly regaining self-control, he gave each jeweled hand one quick, firm pressure and dropped them. "I'll find him at once," was all he said, as he turned away, went bounding down the stairs again, and, without a word to Burnham, hurried from the house, leaving her standing by the safe, with downcast eyes and fluttering heart, inert and nerveless.

Twenty minutes later he came stumbling blindly back. The old mansion was in confusion. Servants were running to and fro. Strange men were in the hall. One of them, a soldierly looking fellow, with pointed moustache

and imperial, in a long black frock coat and low-rolling shirt collar,—a man whom Ingraham had seen in conversation with Mr. Raynor on his first call at the hotel,—now stepped forward and in the soft, half drawling tone of the South said :—

“ Our friend, suh, has had a serious stroke ; but I beg pahdon, you, too, are ill—you’re bleeding ! ”

And at the moment Ned Burnham came hurrying up the steps, followed by the old family physician, Dr. Tracy.

CHAPTER II

ASSAULT THE FIRST

EVEN as Ingraham was hastening on his second errand to the hotel he was turning over in mind some of the events of the week so recently gone by. His heart was hot with its strong, forceful love for Editha Raynor. In spite of himself, his better judgment, his sense of gratitude to his father's friend and partner,—to his own kind friend and benefactor,—that love had taken firm root and grown and flourished, untold, hidden, even rebuked and put to shame and bidden to silence and suppression, until an intangible something in her look, her manner—something shyly eager in her greeting, something appealing in her hitherto frank and cordial demeanor, something reluctant, wistful, detaining in her handclasp,—in her half troubled eyes at parting—had combined to rouse a riot of hope and rejoicing in his soul that reached its climax when he read the pride and joy in her lovely face as she welcomed him to the box, the hero of their commencement day. He knew that as yet he had not a dollar of his own. He owed everything,—his fine education, his modest bachelor home, shared in common with Burnham, his food, raiment,—everything—to the charity

and beneficence of that prince of big-hearted men—John Raynor. He knew that it was that kind patron's earnest wish that he should now, after the summer's vacation, enter for the two years' training at Columbia's law school, and that then he might hope to become Raynor's assistant in what, in the fall of 1860, had been a lucrative and rapidly expanding practice. He was now just twenty-two, but habits of study, thought, reflection and self-examination made him appear three years older,—older, indeed, than Ned Burnham, who was two years his senior. Ingraham, in fact, was the elder of the two in every way but years, and looked on Burnham much in the light of a younger,—a gay, light-hearted, laughing, winsome brother. He knew well, when first they were thrown together in the old grammar school days, how tender a regard John Raynor felt for this frank, merry, bright-eyed, handsome boy, the son of a woman, distant in kin, but dearer in relationship than he had ever dared admit, until she, too, was taken from his life and his eyes were opened even as hers were closed. John Raynor's wife had never held his heart of hearts. She had brought him a certain comeliness of form and feature that faded early, and there lived in its stead little or none of the intellectuality he had thought to find. She had brought him a moderate fortune that was now Editha's, or would be when the days of her legal infancy were ended, and she was now nineteen. Mrs. Raynor had moved a rather regal, Junoesque type of woman when he met her in society, but with fading charms came seclusion, complaints, exactions that stilled and saddened his life, yet

could never change the high-bred chivalry and devotion of his manner toward her. When she died he mourned her in genuine sorrow, but it was a mourning for departing charms of person and non-existent graces of mind, discovered even before little Editha came to bless a union otherwise a secret sorrow to both, for Editha the elder, Mrs. John Raynor, loved no man as she loved herself. These are circumstances under which the coming into a man's life of a woman, sweet, sympathetic, and so near of kin as to engender confidences, is something fraught with danger to the legitimate sharer of his heart and home. Kate Burnham had sought his aid in the recovery of the little estate left her by an improvident husband who had managed to encumber every acre that he devised, and in the course of years John Raynor had succeeded in making her believe that it was her own money, not his, that maintained her, and her beautiful, laughing boy, in ease and comfort to her dying day. She closed her eyes on worldly issues serene in the belief that her idolized son was heir to sufficient property to enable him to live like a gentleman among his fellows. And so he had, but through the benevolence, the lavish generosity of the mother's most devoted friend and kinsman, John Raynor, of New York.

The truth had been made known to Burnham before he came of age. It *had* to be. The lad, though warm-hearted, genial and immensely popular among his fellows at school and at Columbia, was idle, pleasure-loving, extravagant, a spendthrift, in fact, and, as Raynor ruefully admitted, his daring, dashing father all over. It was his frankness,

his fearlessness, his general truthfulness that kept his hold on the aging lawyer's heart, at least so Raynor declared. With high hopes of him because of natural abilities, Raynor had had the disappointment of seeing him turned back an entire year at school simply because he would not study and could not pass the required examinations. Then, when he should have entered Columbia in '56, to Raynor's keen chagrin and Ned's exasperating, whimsical, laughing indifference, he utterly failed in Latin and mathematics and was remanded to school for still another year, entering at last with Rex Ingraham in '57 the oldest man in years and about the youngest in demeanor in the class. "Better let me have mother's little nest-egg and turn me loose, Uncle Jack," he said, with a shake of his curly head. "I'll bring you nothing but worry at college. I'm only cut out for a broker. That's my forte. Wall street—win or lose—play or pay. Rex here will do the proper thing at Columbia. He's a plodder. He'll burn midnight oil by the gallon screwing over Horace and Homer and the Pons Asinorum while I'm just loafing. Don't waste mother's little hoard trying to hammer classics into my noddle. Let me take what there is and—take to the street."

It was then that John Raynor told Ingraham the truth and bade him tell laughing Ned, for the elder man could not look into the fearless eyes—the mother's eyes—and tell that boy he hadn't a cent of his own. There was something of a scene when poor Rex had to pen his chum indoors one soft, summer evening as they were packing for vacation, and then and there gravely lay before him the

exact situation. Burnham was for dumping everything out of his trunk and setting forth among the banks and counting houses down town, the first thing in the morning, in quest of employment. He would not be beholden to any one. He would win his way; invest his salary in the street; win as others had won; pay back every cent Uncle Jack had "advanced" him, and heaven knows what other heroic nonsense besides. He did spend a day or two in fruitless endeavor to get a desk, or even a place, in some office or counting house, and then decided that, having done his best and been defeated, it was his manifest destiny to go through college and get an education, and then his friends *should* see. And so, resigned to his fate, Ned had soon forgotten his chagrin and resumed his light-hearted, careless career, popular everywhere, everybody's friend, the despair of the faculty, who predicted his failure at each semi-annual examination, and marvelled much that he scraped through, until it became evident that he was assiduously "coached" by Ingraham. And so, after a fashion, the four years of student life had sped away; and now, what strange influence hovered over their future! Loving him much as he might have loved a wayward, yet winsome, younger brother, Rex Ingraham had pulled Burnham through the senior year and landed him, with the coveted diploma, at their benefactor's door, only to find their noble friend and protector—the Mæcenas of their academic days—sore stricken with what might be a fatal seizure.

Then, as he hurried through the silent side streets toward the roar and clatter of Broadway, another perplex-

ing train of thought had gone whirling through his tired brain. The day had been full of tense excitement. From early dawn his nerves had been on edge. Hours before they donned their silken gowns for the commencement exercises at the Academy of Music, he had been breakfasting at Delmonico's, then at the corner of Fourteenth street and Fifth avenue, he and jolly Ned, with Kent and Tracy. On three days' leave from their regiment, the New York 71st, in Washington, in their soldierly uniforms these two members of the graduating class had arrived by the early morning train to receive their diplomas at the hands of Columbia's President. At the first call of the head of the nation for troops to defend the capital, the Empire State had marched her magnificent Seventh to the Jersey ferry, even as Massachusetts sent her Sixth and Eighth, full panoplied, to the front. Then speedily followed the other regiments of Gotham's citizen soldiery—the "American Guard" of the 71st, the enthusiastic Irish of the 69th, the one corps of Highlanders, the 79th, prominent among them. With the Seventh at the first call went nearly a dozen of Columbia's students, mainly from the senior class, but they had been returned at the end of the month for muster out as musket bearers, three-fourths of their array qualifying as commissioned officers. Private soldiers the nation could find in abundance; educated and competent officers were at a premium, and more than half of the membership of that world-famous regiment stacked their muskets only to draw the sword. Now, it had been the longing of Ingraham to join the Seventh as soon as he

was eighteen, but John Raynor demurred. Because of his benefactor's reluctance and because of his desire to work his way to higher standing in his class, Ingraham abandoned his cherished plan. Not so Burnham. Ned joined in spite of Uncle Jack's suggestion that he would better wait until he had more stability; was perhaps two months an assiduous and enthusiastic attendant at squad drills, etc. Then came an occasional absence because of a dance or theatre party, then more absences because he was lazy. His squad was passed on to the company; he was held back until declared proficient in the School of the Soldier, and then, between fines for absence and neglect and the chaffing of comrades who had been attentive to duty, Ned repented him of his bargain and was glad at the end of a year to find means to get out without being dishonorably discharged. Even then there were crack companies in the Seventh that had their waiting list and there were plenty to seek his place. So there ended his brief military experience, and his boyish heart was sorely wrung when they declined his services the thrilling day they marched to the front, with an armed foe to meet them on the storied shores of the Potomac.

And now nearly seventy-five thousand strong, the first levies called in April were holding the threatened line, while the great array of volunteers, summoned by the President on the third of May, was being swiftly recruited and slowly licked into shape, and with all his soul in arms, Rex Ingraham longed to be of their number. He had studied the subject for himself. He believed that the tri-

umph of the South would mean the utter ruin of the great republic. He believed that the only way to save the Union *and* the South was to accept the challenge and crush the would-be destroyer on the field of arms. He believed that so brave and martial a people could only be subdued by overpowering numbers. He believed it the bounden duty of every able-bodied man, who had no wife or dependents to support, to step forward to the ranks of the national defense, and when he so told his friend and benefactor he was well nigh stunned by the vehemence of the reply. Raynor would have it that it was a wicked war, a war of oppression, a war with only one objective,—the forcible freeing of the African slaves and the consequent bankruptcy of the Southern planter far and wide. Greely, through the Tribune, had said, "Let the erring sisters go in peace," and so far as he, John Raynor, was concerned, go they should and go against them Rex Ingraham should not.

It was a hard alternative. If he went he lost his benefactor's affection and regard, and must bear the accusation of rank ingratitude. If he did not go, he must forfeit his own self-respect. It ended in his laying the whole matter before the man whose opinion he held highest, the President of his college, and that sterling, vehement patriot said go. Taking no one into his confidence but poor Ned, who seemed unable to make up his mind what to do, Rex had written to Kent as to the possibility of joining the 71st, with the hope of later winning a commission. He had fully determined to leave for Washington as soon as he could

pack and store his various belongings, and this breakfast with the two young officers was to enable him to obtain their advice and learn from their experience. It had been his purpose to tell Editha, and to manfully break the news to Mr. Raynor that very night. And now Editha seemed to lean upon him in these days of her father's manifest anxiety and need. How could he go?—How *could* he go?

He was in no enviable frame of mind when he reached the New York Hotel that evening. Half the men he saw there, eagerly talking in low-toned, guarded words, were Southern to the core; their visitors were sympathizers, in spite of Northern birth,—some of them in spite of Northern affiliations. There was no love lost in the glances exchanged between him and the constituent members of the nearest group. Earlier he had seen John Raynor talking excitedly with these very men. Inquiry at the desk revealed the fact that John Raynor, accompanied by Major Chalmers, had left for home about ten or fifteen minutes before. “Is this Mr. Ingraham?” said the clerk. “Ah, yes; well,—Mr. Raynor expected to reach home before you could start, but he said if you did come to bid you join him there at once.”

Ingraham turned. He still held beneath the open frock coat he had worn during commencement exercises, the little bag of gold, tagged with the name of Philippe Frenier, supporting it there with his left fore arm, his hand holding the lapel close to the chest. It made a very perceptible, bulging lump, and the official at the desk eyed him curiously. So did a short man in serviceable business sack

coat, leaning negligently on the marble counter. His garb was in marked contrast with that of the men thronging the broad lobby, most of whom affected the black frock coat, cut low as to front and extremely long as to skirts, displaying a wide expanse of soft or even ruffled shirt bosom, and of lean, sinewy necks, whereas, except from the front, their legs were visible only from several inches below the knee. Panama hats or "slouches" of black felt were set rakishly on their heads. "Congress" gaiters or patent leather pumps adorned their little feet, and the nether limbs were clothed in trousers as snug about the knee as the New Yorkers' were loose, and as large over the foot—the spring bottomed effect—as the New Yorkers' were small. "Peg top" was the prevailing style, imported, with the rough, serviceable goods in vogue at the time, from England, but in its dress, as in its politics, the South was then a law unto itself. Most of the members of the group, it was noticed, bore military titles—colonel, captain or major, as a rule, yet none as yet, at least, as the clerk had explained to Ingraham on his previous call, was actually in the military service. Some few, he opined, had come north to avoid it, after having opposed the secession of their states. "But they are not in that crowd if the crowd knows it," said the clerk, significantly. "Most of 'em are planters up here trying to save something through the local buyers or brokers. You see their 'factors,' as they call 'em in New Orleans and Mobile, don't half of 'em ship direct to Liverpool. They sell lots of the stuff here and in Philadelphia and Boston. Now the blockade's on

they can't float their cotton ; the factors can't pay for what they can't use, and these gentlemen say their army will soon come marching north to take Philadelphia and New York—Washington and Baltimore are as good as taken now. They can march in whenever they wish. Then the cotton will come with the army fast as the conquered railways can carry it, and they want to sell now for future delivery. The merchants don't see it. The gentlemen are all out of money, but Mr. Cranston just tells 'em to stay long as they please. Lord, love you ! He thinks the North will sue for peace inside of six months, and then all of these cotton growers will be rolling in money."

They look assured and confident even now, thought Ingraham, as he neared the group and sought to pass without jostling them, but excited accessions had been received. Three young men had come hurrying in, and Ingraham caught scraps of the talk. "Bankhead Magruder," "Great Bethel," "Yanks ran like sheep !" "Retreating on Fortress Monroe !" etc., etc. Then hats were swung in air. Pride, delight, exultation shone in many a flashing eye. Hearty handshakes, resounding hand thwacks on black-robed backs and shoulders, not a little joyous pushing, pulling, hauling and heaving followed just as Ingraham was passing, and in some way he was caught between a little side group of four and a surge of frock-coated celebrants, his arm was jerked aside, and with a crashing, metallic thud, the stout little canvas bag struck the marble pavement. Down swooped a lithe young Southron, before Ingraham could recover balance ; swung the sack aloft,

astonishment at its weight showing instantly in his delicate face. "I baig your pahdon, suh," said he. "We—" but was cut short by an older, heavier man who had caught sight of the name on the tag, and who stretched forth a long, large hand, turned the tag to the light, and read aloud: "Philippe Frenier, Baton Rouge! Why, hyuh, this must be some of Raynor's doin's. Foxy old Philippe! He picked out the right man sho's yo' bawn. Now 'f you gentlemen had only known of Raynor in time, you, too, might ha' been getting gold bags and then back to God's country instead of whistlin' fo' yo' dollahs up hyuh where a mint julep can't be had fo' love or money."

"It is Mr. Raynor's," said Ingraham, somewhat impatiently. "He asked me to bring it round here to him, but for some reason has hurried home and left word for me to follow him. Thank you," he continued, as the Southerner gravely restored the bag. Once more he stowed it within his coat. Once more, with brief touch of the hat and "Good evening, gentlemen," he started for the door, and once more came in collision. Half a dozen rushing, shrieking, yelling newsboys came flying across the flagstones and hurled themselves at the open doorway, in mad eagerness to be first. Bursting through their tattered squadron, Ingraham turned to the left and started swiftly up Broadway when the excitement in the faces visible in the colored lights of the chemist's windows, and the wild yells of other newsboys swarming up the pavement, caught his attention. "Battle in Virginny—'Tack on Big Bethel," "Lieutenant Greble killed!" Ingraham seized a paper

and stood reading the fateful headlines and the stirring news: How two strong columns had started forth by night to surprise a little Southern outpost and battery at dawn,—how the roads and columns converged,—how the leading battalions in each column took the other for the enemy and blazed away accordingly,—how stupidly our people shot each other down in the darkness, and then, having raised an uproar plainly heard all over the lower peninsula, had as stupidly pushed on to surprise a post now thoroughly alive to their coming, and how from its secure covert behind the earthworks Magruder's little advance guard had poured a galling fire into the unschooled ranks of the raw volunteers and sent them reeling back on their reserves, and thence to their camps, leaving gallant John Greble of the regular artillery, first victim of the long and awful list so soon, so long to follow. Now, there could be no further question as to his duty. No matter what John Raynor should think or say, Rex Ingraham's name should be enrolled before the setting of another sun. Dumbly he folded the fateful paper, still clamping his left arm across his breast, and then as he left the brilliant lights at the corner and plunged into the dark lane at Waverly Place, he saw two men staring at him from across the way, one of them in long black frock coat and black slouch hat, its brim pulled down over his eyes. Two minutes later, just as he neared the gray flank of the University Building, a tall, dark shape stepped suddenly from behind a tree box. Not a word was said. Rex felt the stunning, crashing blow of a metal-shod fist that gashed his temple as it felled

him. A million stars danced before his staring eyes as his head struck the flagstones. One brawny hand sprawled across his mouth, stifling all possibility of outcry ; another tore away the heavy little bag ; all he was conscious of for a moment was a low-muttered word or two, swift scurrying footfalls back toward Broadway, a fearful throbbing in his reeling brain, and utter inability to rise, and then came other and anxious voices, and kind Samaritans from across the way with water and towels. They had faintly heard the blow, had dimly seen the scurrying forms,—three,—and, scenting mischief, had hastened thither and found him, dazed and helpless. His first demand was to be led, helped, carried, if need be, to the Raynor homestead, and there, maimed and still bleeding, he broke from them and stumbled up the steps to be received by Major Chalmers. The news that we had been whipped at Big Bethel, that Mr. Raynor had been stricken with apoplexy or paralysis, and that young Mr. Ingraham had been waylaid, assaulted and robbed, was all over Washington Square as the big bell in the Jefferson Market tower boomed out the stroke of nine.

CHAPTER III

DOUBTS AND FEARS

THE week that followed this most eventful of Commencement Days was full of alternating hope and dread. John Raynor lay nerveless in his darkened room, unable at first to stir hand or foot, dead for a time at least to everything about him. Then consciousness began slowly to return and the great, somber eyes followed Editha's every movement and gazed into his old friend Tracy's sympathetic face with such intensity of longing that in every conceivable way they sought to fathom his wishes. One thing the doctors called in consultation were agreed upon,—that, if possible, he should not be allowed to recall the circumstances of the robbery of his private safe, for robbery there must have been. Yet that safe was the one thing, as soon became manifest, that was uppermost in his mind. Editha had written on a slate all manner of other suggestions. Did he wish a change of position?—food?—stimulant? Did he wish to see Aunt Alice, (Mrs. Fairbanks), or, perhaps, an additional doctor? Did he wish to see Mr. Watson, the legal friend whom he so often consulted?—Reginald?—Ned? And both she and Dr. Tracy, finding that he could hear, had talked of every-

thing but that safe. Yet there it stood behind the hanging curtains of the alcove, and thither the big eyes turned mournfully, and when, presently, he gained some control of the muscles of his eyelids, by winking, as the doctor suggested, once for "no," which came so frequently, and twice for "yes," which came hardly at all, they established a code of signals, but this was not until the fifth day after the stroke and meantime things had happened of which they knew not how to tell him.

Rex Ingraham's injuries, as so often happens when the head is involved, proved far more serious the day following the assault than they appeared to be at the time. He had been ordered to bed by Dr. Tracy and lay there in his little bachelor den on Thirty-seventh street, suffering much in mind and body, forbidden to read, to see visitors, to do anything, in fact, but "compose himself as much as possible," which meant nothing less than fret and worry. He could have stood it better had Burnham, his joyous friend and chum, been there to cheer him, but Burnham, said the doctor, was in almost hourly request at the Raynors'. He had been such a help to Editha and so useful to the physicians as well as to Mr. Watson. Every day, to be sure, and sometimes twice a day, the Raynor carriage would land him at the door and he would come running up the stairs, with all his old-time buoyancy, to see how Rex was getting on,—to say a few hurried words,—to tell him how their patient was progressing and how bravely Editha was bearing up,—how hopeful they were beginning to be,—to tell him the latest news and all the details of the hapless

affair at Great Bethel. To think that Winthrop, too, should have fallen,—he who had only just time to chronicle the brief, eventful services of the Seventh, to change the regimental gray for the blue and gold of the staff, and then fall in his first fight, striving to rally and cheer the bewildered amateur soldiery, sent all unskilled against a professional in ambush! So far from soothing, Ned's visits only made bad worse, for Rex grew mad with impatience to be up and doing, shouldering a musket with the 71st. Small wonder, then, that fever ensued, and that Tracy speedily found more need of his care on Murray Hill than down at Washington Square. They had brought him home of a Monday night and on the Thursday following he was tossing in feverish sleep and muttering words of the stirring peroration of the speech with which he had electrified Columbia's audience on Commencement Day.

By this time John Raynor was surely mending and Editha had time for much needed sleep, and then, hopeful and refreshed, to receive the visits of a multitude of friends who came with sympathetic inquiry. With Mr. Watson she had compared the contents of the safe with the memorandum in her father's handwriting, and discovered that, in all, the sum of over five thousand dollars was missing, mainly bank notes in their sealed and labeled packages. Even in May of the initial year of the war, gold could hardly be obtained at all, but the notes of Gotham's reliable old banks passed current everywhere through the North, and, even in their pitch of pride, Southern mer-

chants who now refused them, well knew their commercial value. Editha's first thought was one of relief and joy. In her eyes the sum was so small. Watson's grave face, however, speedily turned this to anxiety. "It is something father can readily replace, is it not?" said she.

"It is a large sum to meet at such a time," said Watson, cautiously. "And it is more than fortunate no more was taken. I—I did not know he had removed all cash from the office safe."

"He did, about the first of June. He said that at any time some of his Southern clients might reach New York penniless. They would be sure to go to Mr. Cranston at the New York Hotel and then come in search of him. It would be such vast comfort to them to find their money, all counted out and ready. Father cannot be made to think the war will last at all, but, I hear such utterly different views. Mr. Watson, what do *you* think?"

"It will last until the South is exhausted, Miss Editha, and what I fear—for him and for you—is that your father's business, so promising last fall, is practically ruined now."

She bowed her beautiful head upon the round, white arm that lay along the top of the heavy safe. For a moment the only sound was the measured breathing of the patient, now in placid slumber in the front room. There the windows were raised, the blinds were drawn, and the soft, warm air of June came floating in through the open casement. The nurse sat drowsily cat napping over the Tribune by the bedside. Watson stood sorrowfully watch-

ing the girl whose devotion to her father in his desperate condition had so won the old lawyer's regard. He had long looked upon her as a much petted, over indulged, extravagantly reared young woman, fit only to shine in society and squander the dollars that were often so hard to get. More than once had he ventured to remonstrate with Raynor, preaching prudence, economy, the necessity of laying by against a rainy day, and Raynor briefly invited him to consider his rapidly growing business, his largely increased practice, and said that, as for Editha, she could not touch her own little fortune until she was twenty-one, and meantime it was his pride and pleasure, his one extravagance, to lavish everything he could think of on her. "Your one extravagance," laughed Watson. "Well, that is a good one! John Raynor, you are the most extravagant man on Manhattan Island. You spend nothing on yourself. You squander thousands on your kindred and hundreds on the public at large. If a young man came here this moment with a cock and bull story about a bed-ridden mother, an invalid wife or motherless babes, or a consuming desire to go through college and be a great lawyer, you would draw your check for the suggested amount and tell him to call again." Watson was the only man on earth who dare take this liberty with John Raynor, who froze similar essayists into awed silence. And now the old lawyer had had to tell everything to this spoiled and petted darling of the stricken father's heart, and thought to see her startled and shocked—dis-

tressed to find her days of luxury were ended, and what she said after a moment's thought and silence was :

“ Is there no way in which I can realize *now* on what mother left me? I could make good this loss at once and lift all the load of care and trouble from his dear shoulders.”

And Watson could have kicked himself, had the feat been anatomically possible, so abominably had he misjudged her.

And all the time they were talking, after once arriving at the amount of the deficit, they were conscious of a colloquy on the floor below that, beginning in moderate tone, had become truculent and threatening. The butler was at war with an importunate caller, and Watson and Editha went forth to the hallway to put a stop to it. The visiting stranger had evidently intended the household to hear his remarks in spite of the butler's appeal for “ less noise.” Like an Irishwoman in a street row, he was haranguing the opponent and gazing aloft in search of interested auditors. The sight of Editha's face at the balustrade, and of Watson slowly and goutily descending the stairs, gave him additional steam.

“ Well, I have called at his lodgings a dozen times, and they say he's here, and I've called here time and again and you say he's out, an' I say he ain't out unless there's a blind alley and a back gate. I seen him come in at one o'clock, and he ain't come out since. He's been promising and putting me off, and flesh and blood can't wait no longer.”

“Speak low, friend,” said Watson, reaching the foot of flight. “We have a very sick man up-stairs. Whom do you want?”

“I want Mr. Ned Beresford—Ned Burnham, I believe you call him—and I want him quick or there’ll be trouble, and this flunky (the black-coated butler gasped) refuses to take my card——”

“Mr. Burnham gave orders he was not to be disturbed, sir. He wished a few hours sleep, as he expected to be up all night with Mr. Raynor. He is resting in the third floor front now.”

“Why do you wish to see him so urgently? Is it very important?” asked Watson.

The young man colored and stammered. “Well, it ain’t me—it’s—it’s my sister, and he’s been promising a week past——”

“Hush!” said Watson. “Take that chair and wait a moment,” then stumped painfully aloft. Editha had suddenly disappeared from the landing of the second floor, so he limped on to the third. The door of the front room was closed, but it yielded instantly to his touch and, looking within, Watson saw Ned Burnham, head and shoulders out of the window, scanning the street below. For reasons of his own, the lawyer saw fit not to call him, but stood one moment “*regardant*”; then, with a sharp thump on the door, he entered and, with sudden start, Burnham stood and faced him, and the color that had rushed to the young man’s face slowly receded again. He disliked preachers—and Watson preached.

"There's a man below who insists on seeing you, Mr. Burnham," said the lawyer, "and I think you ought to admit him."

"Some dun," I suppose, laughed Burnham, lightly. "They all know I'm dependent on Mr. Raynor and think me in danger of losing my source of supply."

"Dun he may be, though it isn't money he seeks. His sister needs to see you, he declares, and you best know whose sister has any claim on you."

"No man's sister has a claim on me," answered Burnham, bristling at once and hot with wrath at this essay of a comparative stranger. "If that's the best he can put up, you'd better tell him to go."

"The butler has done that and threatened him with police persuasion," answered Watson, coldly, his stern eyes never unbending their steadfast gaze on Burnham's angry face. He had seriously disapproved of this young man as one of Raynor's greatest extravagances. He had equally disapproved in times gone by of Raynor's obvious interest in this young man's mother, but had had the deep sagacity never to speak of that. Now, true to his theory,—and Watson was a bachelor,—that a woman was at the bottom of every bit of mischief, here was Raynor's precious young prodigal involved in some way with some man's sister. It was high time to bring him to book.

"I think, young sir, you should come down at once and see this man. He says he will not go until he *does* see you, and I dread the row he will make if ejected by force.

It would surely disturb Mr. Raynor. Shall I tell the butler to say you will come or that he may come to you?"

For answer, after a moment's perturbed reflection, Burnham started, brushed Mr. Watson almost rudely aside and sped swiftly, lightly down the stairs. He was fully dressed. He had not been lying down. The bed proved that. A portmanteau with changes of linen lay on a divan or couch. The suit of clothes he had worn earlier in the day was scattered about the foot of the bed. Watson took brief note of these matters, and with a shake of his gray head, went slowly back to the stairway. Editha was not visible when he returned to the second floor. The door of her room was shut. Stepping out to the head of the broad flight leading to the lower hall, he could see that now the door to the front parlor was also shut. Butler, visitor and Burnham had disappeared. Returning to the sleeping patient's room, he exchanged a few whispered words with the drowsy nurse, then slowly descended the stairs. Voices in excited, yet low-toned, colloquy could be heard in the parlor. The butler came and bowed him down the outer steps. The glad June sunshine blazed on a sea of waving, fluttering bunting. From every roof, staff, spire and tower, from almost every cornice, from thousands of windows, high and low, the colors of the Union, the stars and stripes, were flung to the breeze. All Gotham seemed one glow of patriotic fervor. With kindling eyes, Dr. Tracy, coming suddenly before him from Fifth Avenue, pointed to the streaming banners

around the leafy square. "Isn't it grand?" said he. "What wouldn't you give to go?"

"My hopes of the bench, my place at the bar. But, look at these legs," was the rueful answer. "How's your patient, uptown?"

"Ingraham? Coming out all right—with a piece of news waiting for him that may make him delirious again."

"What about?" asked Watson, with sudden start, and a look of concern in his wrinkled face.

"A commission—in the regulars at that." Watson looked relieved. "So many of the Seventh,—so many young civilians—were being commissioned by Mr. Cameron that Columbia put in a claim for Ingraham and got it. The President and Professor Lieber brought it and were there to congratulate him to-day, but he was sleeping."

"So is Raynor," said Watson, briefly. "And, Tracy, I've been imagining myself acquainted with his daughter some years, but, well, any time you think you can't be content without kicking somebody, come and kick me, will you?" With that the lawyer turned and with a flinch at every other footstep toddled painfully away toward Sixth Avenue.

As the doctor rang at the bell he became aware that some one was just inside the inner glazed door opening from the marble-tiled vestibule to the hall. The dim outline of one shape, possibly two, could just be seen, but vanished before the arrival of the butler. Then the parlor door was closed—an unusual thing,—and Tracy looked in-

quiringly into the stolid features of the English *major domo*.

"Some one to see Mr. Burnham, sir," was the explanation. "I think he was about going."

"And wished to avoid me," mused Tracy, as he slowly climbed the stairs to the sick room—"and that young girl asking for him, both yesterday and to-day, at 37th street." Then, looking suddenly up, the doctor beheld Editha awaiting him at the landing.

"One moment, doctor, before you go in to father. How is Mr. Ingraham?"

"Much better, Editha, thank you. And you? I hope you've been resting." Then almost mechanically his practised fingers sought her pulse. Certainly her face wore an unusual flush, and he studied it gravely. A door below them opened slowly, cautiously, yet creaking on hinges long unused, and the heart he was testing gave instant bound. Hurriedly, silently, almost stealthily, two men, young and agile, slipped to the glazed door, opened it, stepped forth, closed it softly after them and were gone.

Then the fluttering heart beats gradually slowed down and the flush faded from the face before him. He gave the slim white hand a reassuring pat.

"Nothing to speak of here," said he. "Now let us go to your father."

CHAPTER IV

A STAB IN THE BACK

TEN days passed by in which Editha Raynor saw nothing of Ingraham. Absorbed in the care of her stricken father, she heard little at the time of her lover's serious injuries—of the loss of the little bag of gold. Tracy had taken him home in the family carriage, with Burnham to see him safely stowed in bed, and then to return to Washington Square where his services would doubtless be most acceptable. It seems that Mr. Raynor on arriving had shown his companion, Major Chalmers, into the parlor; had then gone aloft to his own apartments, where Editha, with pale and anxious face, awaited him. He seemed to divine instantly what had happened, and, with a strange cry upon his lips, stumbled toward the open safe, Editha springing to his side. The next moment the sound of a heavy fall and a scream for help reached the ears of the three men at the moment on the lower floor—Burnham, Major Chalmers and the butler. Of these Burnham was the first to reach the scene, and, quickly stooping, had lifted the limp and nerveless form of John Raynor from the floor to a sofa. Then, leaving him to the care of pallid Editha and with the single word

"paralysis" in the ear of the butler, rushed for the stairs, encountering the Southern major at the foot.

"Tell Miss Raynor I have gone for Dr. Tracy," said he, and shot through the doorway to the street. He was returning with that veteran practitioner when he saw Ingraham stumbling up the front steps—saw Major Chalmers helping him to the library, twining a sinewy arm about, and lifting like a child. Leaving him there with the Major and a huge bowl of water, Burnham and the doctor had then hastened to Mr. Raynor's room, where Editha and Mrs Fairbanks tearfully received them. Raynor was unconscious, breathing stertorously, and the right arm and leg were limp and lifeless. No wonder the women were frightened.

And during the ten days in which he lay, only gradually regaining consciousness and control, most devotedly had he been guarded by Editha aloft and most assiduously by Burnham below. The doctor and Watson both had bidden her say that much of the missing money had been recovered, had bidden him say to importunates, who came with demands from Cranston's or bills from creditor's, that Mr. Watson had undertaken the entire management of Mr. Raynor's affairs until he should be able to sit up, and not a note, line or word succeeded in reaching the patient that could in the least annoy or worry him. Burnham, indeed, took up his residence at the Raynor's, visiting Ingraham only in the early morning or late in the evening. Tracy, who knew the danger, had insisted on sending a capable nurse to care for Ingraham, and

Burnham had little difficulty in persuading himself that *he* would be very much in the way—Rex needing perfect rest and quiet. He clung to this theory even when Rex was able to sit up and more than able and anxious to talk. Burnham saw that his faithful chum had that to say to him which he did not wish to hear, and so deliberately timed his visits at the hours when Ingraham should be asleep. When caught and held he adopted the tactics of talking swiftly, and ceaselessly, generally of Editha, of the messages she sent him, of her solicitude, her deep anxiety, manifested even when her father absorbed all her time and care, if not all her thoughts. It served well for a while, but not forever. Even as he was going one day, talking to the very door sill, Ingraham signalled with his hand. “Nurse,” said he, “leave us a few minutes. I wish to speak to Mr. Burnham,” and though Burnham, too, would have slipped down-stairs, Rex called to him in tones he could not ignore, and so, unwillingly he waited.

“Ned, that poor girl has been here again, and now she asks for *me*.”

“And her cub of a brother has been spying about the Raynors,” was the surly answer. “I cannot shake him off. It’s your fault, Rex. They never knew where I lived until you told.”

“That is not just, Ned, and you know it. Though had I allowed myself to think you would not listen to her appeal I certainly should have told her,” and the blue eyes, though full of pain, looked unflinchingly into the

heavily-lashed, dangerous, dark eyes of his fellow. Burnham's face was flushing with wrath.

"I suppose you'd set 'em on me even at Raynor's, if you got a chance." Then with voice uplifted: "I tell you the girl's got no claim on me——"

"Stop," said Ingraham, sternly, and the thin, white, clinched fist came down with a thwack on the arm of the chair. "She had a comfortable home, and a mother who loved her; you lured her from both. She had a good situation, and her infatuation for you led to neglect of her work and to discharge. Now she's penniless and it's your doing. For one long year I've been pleading and you've been promising," and now the keen blue eyes were blazing, and the elder man shrank from their fire.

"In God's name, what can I do? You know I haven't a cent," was Burnham's petulant cry. "Now they want to bleed—blackmail me, and you aid them."

"You've had money and in abundance, Ned. You have gambled it away, and you know it——"

"You've been spying, too, have you?" burst in Burnham, furiously. "You take advantage of my trust in your friendship——"

"Hush!" said Rex. "The door——"

And the door, opening suddenly, revealed Dr. Tracy. One quick, keen glance he shot from one to the other, both faces flushed and Burnham's lowering and wrathful. "A falling out, I see," was his instant thought, but professional caution permitted no betrayal in his demeanor. Gravely he proceeded to his examination of the patient,

while Burnham, taking advantage of his presence, scurried down the stairs and away.

"You'll soon be measured for the uniform," said Tracy, suddenly. "Then I suppose you'll be up and away."

"Up and away, yes, doctor ; but not in that uniform."

"Why so?" asked Tracy, looking up in surprise.

"Because I've neither the education nor the experience. I'm going into the ranks to learn," was the calm reply.

The doctor looked dazed.

"You don't mean—" he began.

"I *do* mean, my kind friend, that I cannot accept a lieutenancy until I have learned something about the business. All Columbia couldn't make me take it. All the world could not offer anything I am more eager to take, but—not until I am better fitted than I am now."

"I'm betting you'll think wiser of this—once you're on your feet again," said the medical man. "Editha said yesterday she was counting the hours until she could see you in the uniform of the regular army."

The flush that leaped to his young patient's forehead was more than enough to tell the story Tracy already knew. "You wouldn't disappoint her when dozens are going into the regulars as officers, every week, and coming there in their uniforms, with kind inquiries, and in hopes of being seen by her. Not one in five of them knows as much as you."

"It is settled, doctor, and I have to accept or decline

at once. I can wait for the sword, but the moment I'm strong enough to handle a musket off I go—a private in the ranks.”

“You may go,—as an officer,—to-morrow: as a private you shan't stir for a week. There's the case in a nutshell.” And with this as his ultimatum, Tracy drove away. That evening, after seeing Mr. Raynor a few moments and saying words of hope and cheer, he drew Editha aside and begged her to write to Ingraham and bid him drop his Quixotic idea of entering the ranks, and wondered at the color that flew to her face. “Write! I'll write now,” said she, “and you shall take it.”

The next morning, therefore, there came to Rex Ingraham a little missive that he begged the doctor's pardon for reading in his presence, which he did with beaming eyes and again with heightened color.

“Guess now you'll think better of your project, lad,” said Tracy.

“I never thought better of it than now, doctor,” was the prompt reply. And two days later, when about to leave Raynor's to pay his up-town call, Tracy was not utterly surprised to be told in Burnham's drawling tones.

“You needn't look for Rex, doctor. He's gone.”

Coming suddenly in from somewhere, the previous evening, Ned Burnham heard low voices in the dimly lighted parlor. They ceased for a moment, and uncertainly he went on to the library. Once there he listened, and presently again heard the sound, low, murmurous,

yet not so low that he could not recognize the sweet, bell-like tones of Editha's voice, and then another, deep, resonant, tender. Man alive! it could be no one but Ingraham—Rex, whom for three days past he had neglected entirely. And they were alone together, Rex and Editha, for the first time since that eventful evening of Commencement. Through the parted curtains that draped the archway, Burnham peered the length of the long, old-fashioned room. The massive chandeliers, with their heavy, prismatic, crystalline pendants showed no spark of light. The huge pier glass that stood, after the almost unvarying mode of the day, between the two long Venetian windows opening on the Square, reflected the tiny flame that tipped one branch of the central chandelier hanging here in the library above his head, and the white globe of one burner beside the pier glass was faintly luminous from the little blaze within. Was Griggs, the model butler, beginning already the solemn economies forced upon them by the war, or was this tempering of the twilight Editha's doing—or Regy's? A month ago Burnham had noted more than once how the blue eyes of his chum would light with joy at sound of her voice or footfall, and noted it without emotion of any kind. Now he listened with sinking, angering heart. Throughout the winter Rex, who loved outdoor exercise, had been Editha's companion in many a visit to the skating pond in Central Park, and in the spring on many a summer afternoon, side by side, their horses danced eagerly up the avenue or in swift, exhilarating canter through the new-made bridle

paths, and Ned had smiled, unenvying, to see them go. His tastes were not theirs. He had delights of his own, but delights that brought satiety. During the fortnight past, day and night, he had been thrown frequently in association with Editha. Her frank, soulful eyes had sought his, time and again, for sympathy, hope, encouragement. Her soft hand had time and again nestled in his nervous clasp, as though asking and receiving strength and aid and courage. The Editha of the first of May and the Editha of the 25th of June were two different women. How was it—how *could* it have been that he never realized her beauty, her charm, her infinite attractiveness until—until she sat enthroned that glad Commencement Day, and, like the queen she was, sent for her loyal knight, the victor and hero of the tourney, that she might receive the homage of this man of men and requite him with her smile. Then Ingraham had all on a sudden been swept out of her life, and out of his, Burnham's, path; for, though she smiled not in her sore anxiety, Ned knew she leaned upon him, grew to him, appealed to him, and with every day he had felt his passion gaining and believed he saw her heart unfolding to his ardent gaze. And now—now, in the long gloaming of the June evening, when totally forgotten as a possible factor, Rex Ingraham had again stepped upon the scene, and in the purposely dim glow of the parlor lights was murmuring to welcoming ears, in some unseen nook of the deserted room. Burnham had bounded cat-like up the steps. Had they heard him enter? His latch key had quickly done its work, for between him

and the corner he had caught sight of a slender form that even the balloon-like skirts and shapeless mantle of the day could not disguise. And he dared not meet it now. He had hovered just a minute within the door, breathless, thinking that perhaps she might brave him and come and ring the bell, and demand to speak to the man whose real name she had but lately learned. But, though the gas lamp directly in front threw its gleam on a pale, wistful little face that stared hard at the doorway, and even gazed back after she passed it by, pass on she did, and then as Burnham breathed freer in relief at his escape, he heard the soft sounds in the parlor that struck dismay to his heart. The murmurous voices had ceased for a moment, but was it because his entrance had been heard? It had been swift, yet stealthy as any house thief's. He had listened with beating heart, with bated breath; then mechanically, unthinkingly had tip-toed down the marble hall. It might well be, if the pair were in the least absorbed in each other's words, that they had not heard him at all. In that case, why, why turn up the library light? Why betray his presence? Why, in fact, disturb them?

But something *had* disturbed them. Through the open casements, deep, mellow, booming, and echoed by the softer tone of its nearest neighbor away down in the Spring street tower, the stroke of the huge bell at Jefferson Market came floating on the summer air, with the distant shock and roar of the navy yard gun, telling the hour of nine. At the sound, a tall form, a manly, athletic form,

sprang from the sofa in the farthest corner, and a sweet voice said, plaintively: "Ah, must you go?"

"Go!" was the answer. "Editha—I—I should be at the Metropolitan at this moment. I named nine as the hour at which I should join Captain Winn. We go to gether."

And now she, too, had risen, and together they came pacing slowly toward the hall doorway. Another moment and they stood in the full effulgence of the light that streamed from the globe at the foot of the stairs, and there they paused, her hand in his, her eyes gazing up into his that bent upon her worshiping, and Burnham glared upon the two in fascination, while his heart stood still in dread.

"Try to reconcile him to what was my bounden duty," he heard Ingraham say, with one swift glance aloft, "May God soon restore him to you in perfect health, and now, I—I *must* go."

And still he did *not* go, but with both hands now stood clasping hers and looking down upon her with devouring eyes, with lips that quivered, trembled, thirsted for the beauty in her exquisite face,—and dared not. For a moment he stood there, in passionate yearning, in an agony of farewell, with love hot, strong, virile, vehement, pleading for utterance, yet with duty, cold, stern, repellent, dominant, commanding silence and suppression. Her eyes, her face had drooped beneath the fire in his gaze. Her ears could hear the grand throb of his heart; her woman's wit had long since told his story, and though

she may have read and known the scruples that stifled the avowal thrilling there upon his lips, she could not, *would* not let him go until she had heard it.

All on a sudden then, she threw back the queenly little head, and her eyes sought his, welling, welling over with tears—two great crystal drops coursing down her softly flushing cheeks, and the strong man broke at sight of them. With one low cry of “Editha,” he flung her hands away, clasped her, almost fiercely, to his heaving breast, and their lips met in one long kiss before she buried her blushing face in his broad shoulder and sobbed aloud in an ecstasy of mingling grief and joy.

“I had vowed to hide it until I had something beside my love to offer you,” he said, before he tore himself away.

“I want only that,” was her reply, and so they parted.

Yet she could not let him go without one more look. To the open casement she sped and drew aside the curtain, and stood there in the darkened niche and gazed with all her eyes as he went slowly down the steps. A carriage stood at the curb, long waiting for him, but she felt that before he drove away his eyes would search the windows for sight of her. He, her knight, whom she was sending forth to do battle for the flag they loved—he, her conqueror, whose magnetic presence, whose thrilling oratory had filled her soul with pride and admiration—he, her hero, who had dared and suffered for her sake and her stricken father’s—he, her lover, her own true lover, who had sought and striven to curb that love, to still his long-

ing, to silence the outcry of his strong, brave heart until she,—she had willed it otherwise, and compelled him. Even in the moment of parting her girlish heart bubbled over in a little rippling laugh. She fairly hugged herself at thought of how she had broken through the barrier of his stern resolve and made him own his love. She watched him with her soul in her eyes, joyous, beaming, triumphant, with delight that grew suddenly still and cold, and found her shrinking back from the railing, back among the shrouding curtains where she hung, fascinated. What,—what was that thing Ned Burnham had let fall two days ago? What was it about his recovery, Regy's, being retarded by some one's importunity—some girl's visits?

There was a girl, talking eagerly, earnestly with him now. The gas lamp threw its glare on her piteous, pleading, yes, tearful face. His back was toward the house, but surely, surely his head was bent, his ear inclined to—Look! she lays her hand upon his arm. She leans toward him. She is sobbing. Look! He opens the carriage door, he hands her in before him. Then turns, and with one quick sweep of the eyes, seems to search the windows, then springs beside her, slams the carriage door and is driven away!

Cold as ice is Editha's hand as she throws it forth in search of support. She is strangely dizzy. The room seems revolving giddily, and her hand rests on a friendly shoulder. Ned Burnham, his old familiar friend, his chum, his "Fidus Achates," his true and loyal comrade now and always. *He* can clear away the clouds. *He* can

sweep away the devil of suspicion, of miserable, jealous, unworthy, unwomanly, contemptible, cowardly suspicion from her brain. He, with a single contemptuous word, can banish the last vestige of this new, strange, stinging pang. He in Regy's absence shall be her stanch and stalwart friend as he was ever Regy's.

"Did you see, Ned? Do you know—her?—what she wanted with Rex?"

And the hand drops nerveless from the refuge on his shoulder. He is turning away—turning *away*—when she stands there demanding that he laugh at her fears, rebuke her jealousy, scoff at her suspicion—turning *away* when he should tower above her and shame her and scorn her for her disloyalty to that man of men—his hero and his incomparable friend—turning *away* without one word when she is commanding him to speak. He *must* speak. He *shall* speak.

"Ned Burnham, I say did you see—that girl—with him? Do you know her? Who—what—is she?"

An uplifted, warning hand, a drooping head, averted eyes, and then, in sad, reluctant tones, this is his answer:

"Don't ask me, Editha. Remember what I am—to him."

CHAPTER V.

AWAY TO THE FRONT

IT had been Ingraham's purpose to accompany Captain Winn to the camp of the old "American Guard," the New York 71st, and there present himself for enlistment. Kent, his classmate, and an enthusiastic young officer of the regiment, had so advised and urged, but during the tedious journey to the capital, half by night, half by day, Winn took several occasions to advocate a very different plan. It was after 9:30 and he had been waiting with no little impatience, when at last he saw Ingraham elbowing a way through the crowded lobby of that old-time, popular hostelry, and received, not too graciously, the young student's stammered apologies. Winn looked at him in surprise. Recent illness would account for his pallor and lack of flesh, but Ingraham was breathing hard and fast. Perspiration was beading his forehead. "I have been away over to MacDougal street," said he. Then suddenly checked himself. What on earth could have taken Ingraham, at such a time, to so out-of-society a spot as MacDougal street? They were to take train at 10:30, Winn being in charge of some two score strayed and semi-sick men, a class of amateur sol-

diers very much in evidence the first few months of mobilization under the crude, improvised system of a war office that seemed never to have dreamed of war. Those were the days when the city streets were filled with uniforms of every conceivable pattern, worn mostly by absentees from the colors who could show neither pass nor furlough, and almost every train to the capital had its troop cars filled with these military waifs, gathered in by police or provost guard and shipped back in charge of some returning officer, whose lot was thereby rendered a most unhappy one, for they generally managed to smuggle in whiskey and to start an infernal row before getting half way to Washington.

Winn had better luck, however,—his flock being *bona fide* members of an old and fairly well disciplined regiment—men who knew and respected their officers, as a rule, and behaved accordingly. Gathering them up at a temporary barrack in City Hall Park, Winn bade the sergeant march them to Cortlandt street ferry, he and Ingraham following along the sidewalk, and in abundant time the captain had his charges safely stowed in one of the old-fashioned, dust-curtained, lightly built coaches of the Jersey railway. But other detachments were going by the same train that were not so prompt. It was 11:30 before the long string of cars, the open platform “gondolas” on which were then carried the queer little luggage vans, each capable of holding six men’s trunks or one “Saratoga,” the low-roofed “smoker,” the half dozen long, squat passenger coaches, opening both at the

ends and sides, and furnished with canvas skirts and aprons supposed to confine all dust beneath the floors and to send it whirling forth in one dense cloud from under the rearmost platform. Air brakes, oil sprinklers, vestibules, safety platforms, coupler buffers, electric lights and buzzers, rock ballasting, etc.—these were refinements as yet undreamed of. Nevertheless, we thought we rode in luxury in '61.

Once safely through the deep and tortuous rock cuttings of the Bergen Heights and well out along the open marshes, with the soft night wind blowing through the open windows from Newark Bay, Winn began unfolding his views and marvelled much to find Ingraham so unresponsive. He seemed utterly absorbed in his own thoughts. Winn had long known and liked him. Though an older man, the captain had found in Ingraham an enthusiast in the then unusual fad of physical culture. They had met at Wood's gymnasium and spent many an hour together at the weights and clubs and bars and had many a round with single stick and gloves under the coaching of an old-style, straight-from-the-shoulder boxer who had stood up manfully to Tom Sayers and won many a bare knuckle bout with brother Britishers under the cumbrous rules of the London prize ring. Winn, who had ever found Rex cordial, frank, appreciative, marvelled that to-night, though joyous, he should now be so silent and so absent minded.

At last, therefore, as they were rolling through Rahway, Winn folded his coat cape into a pillow and composed

himself to sleep, leaving Ingraham to his own reflections. The dimly lighted train trundled on through the warm June night. They had passed Bordentown, and were winding along the star-specked Delaware when next he woke and found Ingraham still sitting there with unshielded eyes, smiling at him in the new-found happiness of his overflowing heart.

The gray of dawn was in the eastward sky as the ferry boat churned the river into foam and bore them down to Washington street, where after nearly an hour's delay, troop cars were found and coupled to the waiting train of the old Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore. The sun was rising as they rode smoothly across the Schuylkill and headed southward for Wilmington, where hard boiled eggs, doughnuts and coffee could be had by way of breakfast. It was along toward ten when they neared the Maryland line, and now little squads of soldiery showed at the stations, bridges and culverts, for the populace of Baltimore was still truculent and threatening. Whole battalions, regulars at that, were camped on the flats at Perryville and Havre de Grace, guarding the great bridge across the Susquehanna, and Winn had a few cordial words with the red-sashed officer-of-the-day, and begged leave to present his friend and future fellow soldier while they waited for the signal to cross. Then as they ran on toward the Patapsco, traversing long miles of bridge work over broad, shallow arms and estuaries of the Chesapeake, every mile bristling with the bayonets of blue clothed guardians, Winn finally spoke his mind:—

“ You would not accept the second lieutenancy, Ingraham, and I, at least, appreciate your reasons. But it is still open to you, as I understand it, and you desire to fit yourself, and in order to do so purpose joining the 71st. The 71st is a very good militia regiment, and I am proud to be one of its captains, but it is no school for service in the regulars. Moreover, it has not six weeks more to serve. Then what will you have learned and where will you be? It is a strange thing to advise a gentleman to do, Rex, but advise I do. Enlist in one of the old regiments of regulars,—you’ll find detachments of three or four in Washington,—and so learn the business from the ground up. There’s only one way better and that’s West Point, now out of the question. Think of it ”

And Ingraham did think of it,—was thinking of it as the train rolled slowly into the grimy station at President street, and there was split up into separate sections, one car to a section, half a dozen lank horses in long tandem being speedily hitched to each, and then, tooled by a loud-voiced driver, with a long-lashed, fierce-cracking whip, they were towed, twisting and turning through a lane of cobble-stoned streets, still torn and jagged in places where two months earlier the “ Blood Tubs ” and “ Plug Uglies,” the blackguard element of Baltimore, had mobbed the luckless little rear guard of the Sixth Massachusetts, and shot down Union volunteers marching to the succor of their threatened capital. A forest of masts rose at the left hand of the slowly trundling cars, idle sailors and fishermen sprawling on their decks and sleepily staring at

the crowded troop cars. Interminable rows of two-storied shops and houses lined the opposite walk, where little knots and gangs of unkempt, sodden, bleary-eyed rowdies glared in sullen hate at the soldier faces gazing from every window. Over an hour, much over, it took to re-assemble the long train at Camden Station on the southern outskirts, and send it puffing away to the long curved viaduct at the Relay House, where alert-looking, red-striped artillerymen were grouped about their black-mouthed, threatening guns, and a big regiment of infantry, with the shining musket barrels at the shoulder, in the queer, quaint, clerically cut uniform of the old army, topped by the black-feathered, bulging, brass-trimmed, felt hats, then worn to the wonderment of all spectators, stood aligned for some inspection or ceremony in the field not far from the doubled track. Ingraham could never forget that journey to a new life, a new world, filled with incessant thought of the radiant love, the incredible joy, the almost intolerable longing that had so suddenly and unexpectedly burst in upon his circumscribed existence and taken utter possession of him. He could not realize, he could not believe that only a few hours before, in all her glowing beauty, Editha Raynor had been clasped passionately to his heart, that her sweet, warm lips had met his own, yielding, unresisting, even eager, in that long, thrilling first kiss of love. All too soon, all too suddenly he had had to leave her, but all night long sleep shunned his eyelids, as he sat thinking of her and how best to prove worthy of so priceless a love.

Before the white walls, the unfinished, scaffold-circled dome of the capitol came in sight he had made up his mind. Winn was right. If he meant to learn soldiering before venturing to draw sword in command, he would learn from the fountain-head, no matter how hard the life, how coarse the food, the clothing, the language and association, there lay the road to soldier knowledge, practical at least, and there lay his duty. That very evening a gruff sergeant knocked at the office door where sat a young officer in brand new uniform, with glistening buttons and shoulder-straps, and said: "Lieutenant, a man to enlist," and then to Ingraham, with proper savagery: "Tak aff yer hat!" The young officer turned round, gazed one moment incredulous; then sprang to his feet and, to the amaze and disgust of Sergeant Shannon, he and the would-be recruit were rapturously shaking hands and explosively exchanging greetings. It was Lyman, late of the "Seventh" and still of the Sigma Chi, now lieutenant and acting adjutant of a detachment of Uncle Sam's veteran infantry made up from three different regiments. So far from letting his "Brother Sig" enlist, Lyman bore him off to dinner, with a little bevy of comrade officers, by whom the idea was pronounced Quixotic and absurd.

And of all this Ingraham told Winn when, later in the evening, they met by appointment at Willard's, but not a whit was that fine soldier's opinion changed, nor Rex's resolution. To serve now in the ranks of the little battalion of infantry where he was known to so many of the

officers might, however, be a source of embarrassment to all. Gentlemen rankers were unusual in the rough old days of the regulars, though we had them by the score ere the Spanish war came on. Two splendid batteries of light artillery were parked not far away, both commanded by West Pointers of high repute in their profession, and a dozen young graduates of the Academy, detailed as drill instructors of volunteers, and only just wearing their first shoulder straps, were quartered temporarily at the hotel. Among these Winn had already found frank and cordial fellowship, and it was to one of these bearded captains he appealed for counsel, while he left Ingraham foregathering with the youngsters. Willard's was the rendezvous of all Washington in '61, the bar and lobby being crowded every evening. It was now long after ten and many of the officers were leaving for the night, as most of their number had to be up with the sun, and still the veteran commander sat with Captain Winn, occasionally glancing keenly at Ingraham, as he stood chatting with the young West Pointers. Finally he rose and strolled leisurely to the doorway to the avenue, with a kindly nod to the group of subalterns who made way for him in such evident respect and regard, many of them lifting their natty forage-caps instead of giving the more formal salute.

Two civilians, one dressed in the exaggeration of the Southern style, his black coat skirt being even longer, his white shirt more beruffled, his slouch hat more rakish than ordinary, stood in earnest conference close to the entrance,

absorbed, apparently in their own affairs, but both looked up in sudden interest as the two officers, one the Mexican war veteran of regulars, the other the young captain of militia, shook hands at the doorway, and the senior said in his resonant tones :

“ You may say to Mr. Ingraham for me that, for the reasons I have given you, I counsel him to start in the cavalry ; then, if he ever need a friend and I can aid him, let him come or write to me.” Winn walked with the captain to the curb, where an artillery orderly, in jaunty jacket and polished shoulder scales, stood waiting with the horses ; then raised his forage-cap, as the captain mounted and rode quietly away. When he returned to the lobby, both the civilians had left the door and, furtively studying Ingraham, were hovering within earshot of the little group. Winn eyed them closely as he drew nigh, and in some confusion they fell back a few paces. Then after a moment’s murmured talk, they withdrew to the doorway again, yet even there Winn could see they were watching Ingraham, and he wondered why.

About eleven the party broke up, Winn starting for his lodgings up Fourteenth street, after telling Rex of the artilleryman’s advice and promising to call for and breakfast with him in the morning, Ingraham going to his own little room on the third floor. He was tired and ready for sleep, and needed it, and was not too well pleased when overtaken and accosted by the two men he had had occasion to observe for nearly an hour. But nothing could have been more courteous than the manner of the gentle-

man in the black frock coat and snowy shirt bosom. The other was far more brusque and businesslike. There was nothing Southern in either tone or manner when the latter ranged alongside, and, thrusting out his hand, said: "Mr. Ingraham, my name's Blunt and that's what I am—just plain business—plain Blunt; but my friend here has reason to wish to speak to you on important matters, and didn't like to intrude so late. I said, 'Business is business, come along,' and here we are. Mr. Ingraham, shake hands with Mr. Frenier."

Up to the moment of the mention of his name, Ingraham stood looking the intruder straight in the eye, in manifest disapprobation. But Frenier! That put a new face on the matter.

With uplifted hat, the Creole was gracefully bowing. He did not even essay to offer a hand. With his right he was clutching the black felt, with his left extending a card.

"Philippe Frenier?" said Ingraham, inquiringly, and with welcome in his face. "I had thought to see an elder——"

"N-not Philippe—a—, M'sieu Ingraham, but ee's naiview," and again he tendered his card, which Rex took mechanically, then glanced at the name.

"Edouard Frenier,"

it read, in dainty script, written with a fine pointed pen, not engraved. In bearing, garb and manner the young Southerner looked as though just transplanted from the

"Lower Coast" along the swirling Mississippi to the dusty streets of Washington.

"What can I do for Mr. Frenier?" inquired Rex, in all courtesy. He could still extend no such welcome to the man in the loud check suit. Somewhere, and recently, he had seen him before.

"The h-honor of five meenits conversation," begged Mr. Frenier, and the two were silently bidden to enter Ingraham's room, where, in few words M. Frenier explained that he was about visiting New York after receiving the sanction of the State Department,—that he came at the instance of his Uncle Philippe, of Baton Rouge, now lying dangerously, even critically, ill; that he was instructed to see Mr. John Raynor in his uncle's behalf, and that he had read in the New York 'Erald a brief aecount of that gentleman's alarming illness, and of the assault upon and robbery of Mr. Reginald Ingraham. Was it so that the gold was tagged with the name of Philippe Frenier? and had it been intended for him? It was so? Grand Dieu, what of misfortune! And had there been other losses, as rumored? But yes? O Ciel, what of calamity! But assuredly M. Raynor would promptly make good the amount of which M. Philippe Frenier stood so much in need. Of this Mr. Ingraham did not feel authorized to speak. Mr. Raynor would soon be ready to attend to business, and M. Frenier could see him in person. But there was a hitch. Mr. Edouard Frenier had been too long detained in Washington, assuring the Department of State that he was North in no inimical role,—neither as

soldier spy, nor civilian foe,—and now his uncle is ill, very ill, and appeal for his nephew to return at once. A boat leave for Norfolk to-morrow evening. He must get his pass, his safety guard, and it is essential he go at once. But here was his good friend and factor, Mr. Blunt, late of New Orlean, but, being Unioniste, compelled to come North. Mr. Blunt has consent to go and represent him in New York, and would call on Mr. Raynor with his credentials. All Uncle Philippe's letters will probably be there awaiting him, but M. Raynor, who would know Edouard at once, might not know Mr. Blunt at all. Therefore, they would pray of Mr. Ingraham but a few lines of introduction. That would be all, and with lighter heart Edouard could return to embrace his uncle and be a comfort to him. Mr. Ingraham would have the great amability?

Mr. Ingraham rose. "You are both strangers to me, gentlemen," said he, calmly, if not coldly. "But Mr. Frenier's statement of the situation is so lucid that I am moved to do as he suggests. ("Ah, what of goodness! what of complaisance!" from Mr. Frenier, but Mr. Blunt sat gloomily expectant.) "It shall be ready for you at the desk at 10:30 to-morrow, if you will have the goodness to call at that hour."

"Ah, but to-night, to-night," pleaded Frenier. "Consider the imperative need of haste. Mr. Blunt should start by first train and be there to-morrow evening."

"It would avail him nothing, sir," answered Rex, his

suspicious fully aroused. "Mr. Raynor can see no one for a week yet," and with that he bowed them out.

"I told you so," said Blunt, as they hurried down stairs. "He's had one lesson, and I'll see he gets——" then broke off short as they turned a sharp corner and came face to face with Winn, most unexpectedly returning.

CHAPTER VI

TROOPER REX

AT eight of the clock on a hot July morning, on the rough, red brick walk, and in the shade of a long, old-fashioned, red brick and green-blinded building, stretching from within a rod or two of Pennsylvania Avenue, southward toward the Potomac, a little soldier ceremony was going on, supervised by a brace of slim young officers in long-skirted, single-breasted frocks, girthed with crimson sash and black leather sabre belt, and scrutinized by the invariable throng of lazy, loafing negroes, waifs of the Washington streets. A dozen strong, and each commanded by a hoarse-voiced Irish sergeant, two detachments of blue-jacketed, high-collared, tight-waisted troopers were aligned and at attention and staring stolidly, stiffly to the front. Quaint and odd as the uniform would look to-day, it was then the nattiest worn in the army. By some special dispensation, perhaps, the black Kossuth hat, prescribed for full dress, had been abandoned by these men designated for special duty, and each trooper wore a dark blue cap of peculiar shape, fitting snugly about the head and drawn down well to the eyebrows. The broad circular crown fell over to the

front at a slant of nearly forty-five degrees, ornamented by brass crossed sabres, with the number of the regiment and letter of the troop, all gleaming with polish. The semi-circular leather visor was turned up instead of down, an affectation of the regulars, it seems, winked at by inspecting officers, as also were the high-heeled, narrow-toed boots of certain of the sergeants and service-worn elders of the Corps. Close buttoned to the chin, each man wore a snug-fitting jacket of dark blue, its every button glistening, its high hooked collar, back seams and edges trimmed with coarse cotton lace,—the old guard, farthest south, of orange color, the new guard, beyond them, of glaring yellow, the sole distinction in dress between the old-time dragoons of the Mexican war days and the new-made cavalry, offspring of that martial war secretary, now marshalling the hosts of the South in their startling defiance of the national flag. Long, light blue trousers, strapped down under the boot, garbed the nether limbs of both detachments, the non-commissioned officers of the dragoons wearing narrow stripes of orange, those of the cavalry of vivid yellow. Clumsy brass spurs, shining like quicksilver, hung low on each heel and clinked and scraped the pavement with every step. A broad black sabre belt of "buff leather," with long buff leather slings supported the gleaming steel scabbard hooked up at the left hip, its heel sticking out to the front; belt plate, hook and studs all in the same state of high polish. Grasped in each right hand, supported low at the right thigh, from the brazen guard extended to and beyond the shoulder the long, gently curving blade of the sharp-

pointed sabre. Each hand was cased in spotless white cotton glove, each shoulder ornamented by brazen scales and ~~circlets~~ ^{ciclets}, glistening even in the shade. Over the left shoulder and under the scale swung the broad black carbine sling—"ink balled" and rubbed until it shone like patent leather, while the snap and swivel, pendant just behind the right elbow, matched in polish the glittering blade. Keen faces were these that gazed forth, impassive, from underneath the visors. Some few were of the phlegmatic German type, but most of them had the dare-devil cut of the Celt or the native American. All were clean shaved except as to the upper lip. Trig, trim, jaunty and neat as the new pin of tradition, there they stood, two typical squads of Uncle Sam's mounted warriors, the one just completing, the other just beginning a twenty-four hour tour of duty at the gloomy old War Department, nominally as guards and sentries, but principally as messengers—"orderlies" or couriers, as the case might demand. Their horses stood ready under the shade in "F" street but a square away. The real guard-and-sentry duty of the department was done by the sombre little detachment of infantry now marching in from the avenue at the north.

Third man from the right, in the front rank of the yellow-trimmed squad stood Trooper Ingraham, already schooled in the rudiments and taking his tour with the elders, apparently quite as much at home. The lieutenant commanding his troop, who six months ago was wearing the chevrons of a sergeant, had taken his measure at the start, and said nothing. The troop sergeants looked

at his slim white hands and the cut and style of his civilian garb and winked at each other, but the corporal told off to teach him the facings, the manual of the carbine and sabre, found it an easy job, and interlarded his instructions with no blasphemy. Many of the members of the troop, tenting temporarily near the shed stables a few squares up "F" street, were, like Ingraham, new to the trade and some were already supremely miserable. Among them, however, were half a dozen lusty farmers' boys, accustomed to horses from babyhood, and to them the curry comb and brush, the sound of stable call, had no terrors whatever, nor had they for Rex. All through his boy days his pony and himself had been inseparable. He had fed, watered, groomed and bedded him day by day. It had been one of his father's stipulations, and the sergeants who had happened to gather behind him when grooming began, looked queerly at each other, as Ingraham bent to the task, with a big, bay troop horse as his particular care. How was it that this fellow who looked like a swell could groom like a stableman? In riding, too, Sergeant Flynn found he had no tyro to deal with, although it was obvious that the McClellan saddle of the early sixties was not to his liking. The high pommeled, high-cantled tree, covered with untanned pig skin and skirted with black leather, was a rude change from the flat seat and Park saddle; but Rex soon saw the hard "horse sense" that prescribed every item of the equipment, even to the huge, hooded, wooden stirrup, so different from the slender steel to which he had been accustomed. Even these had their excellent points. He

saw how secure a seat was given the average rider, how with the minimum of fatigue to either mount or man, the weight of the heavily armed trooper was borne mile after mile. All but the clumsy leather skirts, destined ere long to rejection as useless, he soon became reconciled to the new seat and saddle, though he shook his head at the ill-fitting, single reined curb with which the raw-handed recruits were speedily tormenting their mounts. "Take everything as it comes and say nothing" had been his maxim from the start, and though there was much in the life and association he could never have submitted to except as a matter of a few months of self discipline and study, he could have been sure that he had taken the best road toward fitting himself for a position, and content with his daily routine and even with his daily bread,—with even the lukewarm bowl of light brown soldier coffee, but for one strange and sorrowful thing:—

Not a line had come to him from Editha Raynor since their parting two weeks before.

Two telegrams had reached him from New York and as many as a dozen letters, including three from Burnham. Some of these threw a dim light on the situation; others only served to make it more trying and obscure. First in order of receipt was the wire brought to him by Captain Winn the night he spent at Willards. "Thought it might be something of immediate importance," said the captain, as he came hurrying in, "so I came right over with it." The superscription read:

“REGINALD INGRAHAM,
“Care Captain John Winn, 71st N. Y.,
“No. —, 14th Street,
“Washington, D. C.”

Rex tore open the envelope and read :

“Return of packages for Frenier and others urged. Avoid trouble. No questions.

“CHALMERS.”

For a moment Ingraham could not believe his senses, but read and reread, his brow knitting, his face growing almost gray.

“What is it, man?” anxiously queried Winn, and without a word Rex handed him the despatch, and in turn the captain studied, inside and out, as men will turn a paper they cannot understand. Finally he looked up.

“Who’s Chalmers?” he asked.

“The only man of the name I’ve ever met was with Mr. Raynor at the New York Hotel, and accompanied him home that night,” was the answer.

“How’d he know me or—my address?”

“I have no idea, unless Burnham gave it, or possibly—Miss Raynor.” He shrank from mention of her name in such a case.

“And for what on earth is he wiring you about packages? One would think you had had trouble enough. You saw—Burnham before—coming away?” and the captain looked up queerly.

“We *were* to have met during the early evening at Mr. Raynor’s, but—I did not see him.” The recollection of

that wonderful hour, during which Burnham was totally forgotten, sent the warm glow to Ingraham's fine face. Not until he encountered that poor girl on the walk without did he learn that Ned was even then within the doors. It was improbable that Ned would reappear so long as she remained on watch for him. Here was opportunity to help them both—to carry out a half formed plan—to bear her back to the mother whom the poor child had left that she might live nearer the roof that sheltered her lover, as she believed Burnham to be, and, by appealing to the better nature of the girl herself, to induce her to promise to remain under her mother's care and to pursue his unhappy chum no longer. For Burnham was unhappy; Rex could see weeks before Commencement how nervous and restless and worried he was growing, and, in the fullness of his heart, had begged to be trusted—confided in. "If it's money, Ned, you know I've got a little laid by. If it's—forgive me now—Rosie or her people, perhaps I can even serve you there. A fellow, who claimed to be her brother, stopped me on the street two nights ago. If you've made up your mind to break that off I'll help you all I know how, Ned. Only tell me," he had said. It was one soft evening toward the end of May, Commencement close at hand, and Burnham in reply had begged him to say nothing, do nothing, at least not then, and then had broken impulsively away. Later they had had other and graver talks, as has been told, for Rex had seen the girl herself and heard her own sad little story. How many another is

there, just as plaintive and pathetic! How few women there are who can bring themselves to patiently hear or read them!

But now Rex saw a way, as he thought, to be a friend to both, and, briefly telling her that he was to leave for Washington within another hour and must hear what she wished to say as they drove, he handed her into the carriage, and, bidding the driver go round the Square and down MacDougal, listened patiently a few minutes to her tearful and now indignant flow of words, and then set before her his own plan and promise. It ended in his leaving her within the doorway of her mother's poor little home in the MacDougal quarter, with a slip of paper in her eagerly clutching fingers, and her promise that never again would she, or should her brother, approach the Raynor mansion in search of Ned Burnham. Not one word of this had he told Winn beyond the mention of his having to visit at MacDougal street. Not one whisper of it could he tell him now, for his chum's sinful secret was as a sacred thing. There had been no betrayals in Sigma Chi.

But Winn, remembering well Ingraham's explanation and his own surprise that anything should take a man of Ingraham's social standing to such a quarter, was puzzling over the message and putting things together. "You—never—happened to mention what took you to MacDougal street," was on the tip of his tongue, but fortunately got no further, yet Ingraham seemed to read the thought in the captain's sombre eyes, and suddenly went crimson. Ex-

planation was impossible. It were better to let Winn jump at his own conclusions, as jump he did.

That was message No. 1. The next came a few days later, and again to the care of Captain Winn, who meantime had rejoined his regiment at a somewhat distant camp, so that the message, sent by mounted orderly to the quarters of the troop, was nearly three days older when it reached the hands of our college-bred recruit and found him brooming out the dusty gangway of the stables. He had sent the first to Burnham, bidding him find Major Chalmers, if still in New York, and if Chalmers denied all knowledge of the despatch, as Ingraham believed he would, then to endeavor through the telegraph officials, and if need be the Chief of Police, to detect the sender. Four times in two weeks Ingraham had written full-hearted and affectionate letters to his chum. Three times in those two weeks had letters come in at least partial reply, and over those letters Rex had pondered long and painfully. What could have come over Burnham? What evil spirit was juggling with the good name of the absent and defenseless? Even as he bore this second telegram from the darkened depths of the stables to the noonday light without, he was thinking of the first of those letters written four days after their parting. It was so unlike the old Ned, in spite of the fact that Burnham had ever been one of those friends who seemed to feel no pang in telling a comrade, for his betterment of course, the adverse opinions expressed of him by college mates and friends. It read:

“DEAR REX.

“Yours from Willard’s, with its strange enclosure, came to the old den, so dismal without you, two days ago, and ever since I have been working and puzzling. Chalmers left for the South, so Mr. Cranston assures me, the night after you left for Washington (there was bad news of Frenier—reported dying at Baton Rouge), but I have not yet been able to find the office from which that remarkable message was sent, or, at least, have not been allowed to see the original. You know they are compelled to preserve all originals and forbidden to entrust them to strangers, or indeed to anybody, without orders from headquarters. To get such orders I *have* to tell the manager, or somebody, a lot of things that I can’t help thinking you would rather not have mentioned. You see Chalmers was with ‘the Governor’ quite a while the evening of the discovery and expected to be the bearer of a good deal of that money back to Mississippi and Louisiana. He had to go without a dollar because Watson sealed up everything until uncle should recover. Chalmers went away wrathful, saying ugly things about uncle and his ‘minions,’ and he was in mood to send you that despatch and had time to do it. He wormed some things out of that babbling old butler—you know how he kotost to a Southerner—‘the landed gentry,’ as he calls them,—and the fellow Chalmers professes to believe the assault and robbery of which you were a victim was all a ‘plant,’—that you hired somebody to knock you down and run, after you had carefully hidden the gold. Then that old fool of a Watson admitted to him that you were several minutes alone at the open safe while Editha was saying adieu to her captain down in the hall. Then, but pshaw! Rex, what should I be telling you these idiotic stories for? *I* know they’re all bosh or malice, but of course there’s always a lot of amateur detectives and fool-headed prattlers at such times, and you’d split your sides laughing, or swearing, at the theories *I’ve* had to listen to. Indeed, I almost had a fisticuff with one fellow, Sigma Chi at that, but he took water at

once and others interposed. Rest assured you shan't suffer while I'm around. Now, I'll say no more on this head till I know more. You'll hear in two or three days. Meantime, tell us all about the new move. 'Enlisted in the cavalry, regulars, as a private trooper' seems such a strange thing when we all counted on your being an officer.

"The Governor steadily improves physically, and Tracy says that he'll soon be sitting up and might recover entirely, only he seems so dreadfully cut up about these—and other—losses. It is Editha who now seems to need the doctor's attention. The shock and strain, probably, have begun to tell. At all events, she is keeping her room just now, with Mrs. Fairbanks to comfort her, and hasn't been down-stairs for three days. Nothing further from our importunate visitors. Brother James seems to have meandered elsewhere, if he is her brother, which I have doubted these many moons. Thine,

"NED."

The next was shorter—and five days later.

"DEAR REX.

"I understand, of course, just how annoyed you feel about this miserable business, but I don't understand how you can expect me to give you categorical details. It isn't so much the *words* people use, it's the *way* people use them—the way they look, and the tone, or expression or something—I can't describe it—that betrays the suspicion lurking in their brains. *Don't* insist, dear boy. I assure you I am doing everything in my power to get to the bottom of this outrage—that's what I call it, and your coming back would only complicate matters. You are hot-headed and will simply stir up a fearful row and spoil everything. Through a friend at court, I am promised a peep at the original of that despatch this week. Then you shall hear further.

"Sorry to learn that soldiering has such unpleasant accompaniments. I thought it was all beer and skittles. There's a big mili-

tary play on at Barnum's now, and a song, with tin cup chorus, 'The Soldier's Life Is Gay and Happy,' but I suppose that's in the infantry.

"You seem to think I ought to know more about the Governor and Editha. How can I? I've seen him two or three times, but I'm enjoined not to talk, or let him talk, of the money business. Old Watson is here day and night, and prying into everything, one reason, I believe, why Editha keeps to her room, so that I can't see her, and I've been hoping for opportunity to deliver your message. Such letters as have come from you for her, I understand, have been delivered, and she'll probably write when well enough. The stacks of flowers that come for that girl!

"Yours in haste,

"N. B."

The third, shortest of all, had reached him two days before his appearance with the guard detail.

"DEAR INGRAHAM.

"There is no use in your prodding me as you do. I don't own the telegraph company. I have no control over Editha's correspondence. I can't see men who are no longer north of Mason and Dixon's line. There was a regular hegira of long-haired, long-coated Southerners from Cranston's last week. Something's up and we don't know what, but even if you could get a furlough, which you say you can't, it would do you no good to come here. The old man is cranky, and I don't know what's the matter with Editha. She's up and about, but—see here. The old woman, Rosie's mother, you know, has taken to letters herself, setting forth what a jewel of a man is Misther Ingraham, and, damn it, now that she's got my right name, how she does wrong it! What does it all mean, Master Rex? Have you been doing a little of the speak-for-yourself-John business, and consoling the fatherless and the widow and incidentally cutting out your old-time chum? Con-

fess now, for something has happened to relieve me of all. Ought I to be obliged—or jealous? Yours,

“BURNHAM.”

But that second telegram, received just after the second letter and dated just before it, perplexed and disturbed him most of all. He did not refer to it when he wrote to Burnham.

“REGINALD INGRAHAM,

“Willard’s Hotel, Washington, D. C.

“Major Chalmers entrusted with papers and proposition. Authorized act for John Raynor. Restore to him, not Watson.

“FAIRBANKS.”

Rex had that despatch in its worn envelope, stored in the pocket of the coarse, yet jaunty looking trooper jacket when at 10:30 that blistering July morning the trig young officer, commander of the guard, came briskly down the walk to the door of the little basement room where the troopers were lounging. “A corporal and two men to ride at once with * Colonel Hunter,” said he, and in five minutes Ingraham found himself silently bringing up the rear of an imposing little cavalcade.

In advance, on a powerful, spirited bay, rode an officer, tall and slender, in the double-breasted frock of a colonel of cavalry, his shoulders decked with the gold-barred strap and the silver spread eagle, his waist encircled by the crimson silken sash, half hidden by the plain black sword belt.

* Though their commissions as Generals of Volunteers bore date May 17, the veteran regulars, commanding divisions, had not received those commissions up to the time of First Bull Run.

His face Ingraham could not see; for, except when returning salutes, he looked neither to the right nor left. Four staff officers rode in single rank several yards behind him. Four orderlies, at respectful distance, followed these,—members, evidently, of the dragoons, and they had neither eye, hand nor tongue for the three light horsemen unexpectedly called to reinforce the party. Yet it was the latter that were first to receive official recognition. Down past the massive treasury building they moved at stately pace, scores of people stopping on the sidewalks to stare at a sight still almost strange at Washington. Turning into Pennsylvania Avenue, the leader looked about and signalled. A staff officer spurred forward, then turned back.

“Send up an orderly,” he cried. “Go you, Ingraham,” briefly said the Irish corporal, with a nod, and a moment later, his gloved right hand at salute and his heart beating just a bit, Rex reined in beside the veteran colonel of regulars, commanding one of McDowell’s divisions, and the swarthy, keen-eyed, high cheek-boned face, clean shaved but for the heavy moustache, turned full upon him.

“Do you know the way to Arlington?”

“I can find it, sir, after crossing the Long Bridge.”

“Then present my compliments to Colonel Burnside; say Colonel Hunter is on the way to his headquarters and should be there soon after you. Give this man a pass, captain.”

Armed with this *open sesame* to the military barriers at the bridge, Ingraham trotted away, and ten minutes later was clattering over the loose planking on his first errand to the sacred soil.

CHAPTER VII

A RIDE OF MISHAPS

A SINGULAR state of affairs, from the soldier view point, was that existing about Washington in the earlier days of the civil war. Barring the handful of regulars the troops first assembled, on that memorable "hurry call" from the capital, were state militia, in all manner of regimentals from grave to gaudy, and in all conditions of discipline between the limits of bad and indifferent. The first flush of zeal and patriotism soon faded out in the discomfort and monotony of camp life, and the absorbing craze of at least every other officer and man seemed to be to get out of duty and into town. A "pass" was dear as promotion, and neither was hard to find provided one went about it in the right way, which, from that same soldier viewpoint, was the wrong way. Personal application availed a little, political influence a lot; and the number of men this bright, hot morning in July with influence enough to get them a day off duty was something startling. In ambulances, hacks, carry-alls, buggies, and even farm wagons "the boys" were swarming across the long, long thoroughfare, all eager and some profane, *en route* for the streets of Washington, all supplied, or nearly

all, with the autograph permit scrawled over by the signatures of first sergeant, captain, colonel and brigade commander before it became of convincing value. The gay jackets of the gunners, eclipsed only by the gayer and more picturesque dress of one Highland battalion, and the fanciful garb of the First Fire Zouaves, the solid blue of the men of most of the regiments, the gray of the Eighth New York and of Wisconsin, the pleated blouses of Rhode Island, the feathered felt hats of some few commands, the oddly built forage-cap of the great majority were all in evidence as team after team came trundling along northward, the occupants effusively greeting and even guying officers, orderlies and messengers trotting in the opposite direction. The walk from the mud-encompassed camp to central Washington was a long and trying one under such fierce heat, and certain civilians, with an eye to business, profiting by the situation, had succeeded in extracting permits from some one in authority, and were entertaining all comers at their roadside refreshment booths or lugging them to and fro at rates the average soldier would refuse to pay at any time except, perhaps, just after pay-day, when money fled from his touch like drops of water from a red hot stove. The sight of a "regular" trooper in jaunty uniform and polished brasses, sitting square down in his saddle on a swift trotting bay, drew forth shout after shout from the knots of soldier stragglers afoot, or the miscellaneous cargoes awheel. Never a word or look of reply, however, came from that stolid messenger. Between the long column of white-topped army wagons, southward

bound, and the unsightly procession moving in the opposite direction on their left, he skillfully guided his steed, and, seldom drawing rein, rode steadily on, indifferent, apparently, to blazing sun or withering chaff, emerging at the Virginia end of the Long Bridge at the moment the division commander, with his little retinue, was entering it, a good mile away.

But now a new problem presented itself. Once past the guard at the north end of the bridge, he had met no barrier to his progress other than these wagon trains on the one hand and the nondescript vehicles on the other. It had been possible for him to move at fair trot, but a leveled bayonet at the south end of the structure brought him to a halt until the young officer, examining passes of the would-be visitors to Washington, could find leisure to come and look at his. This struck Ingraham as bad tactics. On one hand was a wagonload of roisterers, already well primed for the mischief of the day, each man provided with a paper more or less questionable in the eyes of the guard, and all requiring some minutes of valuable time: on the other was the official messenger of a division commander, highest in rank of those serving at the front, ordered to go with speed, and having about him every indication of being on duty, not pleasure, bent. Yet the verdant young officer lingered parleying with the one and merely glanced indifferently at the other. Another month and much of this was changed, but Bull Run and chaos were yet two weeks away. The new dispensation could

only come with another moon—and a very different guiding star.

Ingraham and his mettlesome bay both began chafing with impatience, the horse, as horses will, quickly absorbing the mood of his rider. The vehicle now occupying the attention of the guard had been checked on the muddy causeway, just south of the bridge head. It was a worn, open, four-seated, canvas-roofed 'bus driven by a thick-headed darky and crammed with a keen witted dozen of soldier boys and half a dozen sharp featured civilians. Some of these latter were employes of the nearer sutlers' shops sprung up along the Alexandria roadside. Some were emissaries of business firms in New York, Boston, or Baltimore. One was evidently proprietor or agent of the improvised 'bus line, for he had been riding on the steps, keeping an eye on his cargo, and was now narrowly watching the result of the examination made of each pass in turn. From his position it was impossible to see the cavalry orderly, nor could the latter see him. He was a burly, coarse-featured fellow, loud and confident in manner when out of sight and hearing of the inspecting officers, but here at least, in presence of the bridge guard, maintaining the silence of unwilling respect. Nor was it the young lieutenant of whom he stood in awe, for every now and then, furtively, quickly, his eyes sought the new wall tent pitched on a little patch of made ground to the west of the roadside, where stood beneath the canvas fly, two officers in close conversation. One of these, a first lieutenant of infantry very erect and soldierly, wore over the right

shoulder of his close buttoned frock coat the red sash of the officer-of-the-day. The other, seated at a little table and studying the signatures on certain passes set before him, bore the gold bars of a captain on the blue of his "rectangles." Ingraham, seated in saddle in front of the still lowered bayonet, and stroking the quivering neck of his impatient mount, could distinctly see the legs of these two officials and no more of them. The civilian, still perched on the rear step of the rattletrap of a country 'bus (It bore the legend "Arlington and Alexandria" in faded letters on the mud-bespattered side) could see much more, and what he saw was so disquieting that he presently dropped from the step to the mud beneath and tip-toed his way forward to the off, or eastward, side until he got in line with the driver, and then beyond him caught sudden sight of the natty cavalryman. At him he gazed one minute in mingled amaze and incredulity, gazed unseen by the object of his scrutiny, then dropped quickly back behind the sheltering seat, for Ingraham was impatiently looking his way. He had decided to appeal to the senior officer of the guard. The sentry, he with the leveled bayonet, had orders to halt and hold mounted individuals except officers of high rank, with their retinue. The orderly was forced to call quite loudly, therefore, and at sound of his clear, resonant voice the last vestige of doubt fled from the face of the bulky civilian, and he fell back to the hub of the front wheel where he could not possibly be seen.

"I beg pardon, lieutenant," were Ingraham's words. "But I am bearer of Colonel Hunter's message and or-

dered to lose no time," and then, just as luck would have it, the officer-of-the-day backed from the tent, faced the crowded 'bus and sharply called: "Mr. Burton! Where's Mr. Burton?" And as Mr. Burton had disappeared and had reason for not wishing at the moment to reappear, it became necessary for the officer of the day to renew his call. It gave the hilarious occupants of Burton's 'bus abundant opportunity to repeat it, with varied emphasis and emendations of their own. It further gave the junior officer excuse to pretend he did not hear the orderly's call, and time to think. He had heard it distinctly, but he did not know just what the occasion demanded of him, and he did not wish the 'bus load of satirists to know he did not know; so he, too, busied himself in producing Mr. Burton, to the end that the person in demand came slowly to light and was forcefully bidden to step to the tent and explain a certain paper. This brought him into full view, and Ingraham knew him at the instant. Burton at the Long Bridge was the Blunt—"just plain Blunt"—who bade him shake hands with Mr. Frenier at Willards. Verily Blunt was a man of affairs,—many affairs.

And now the orderly made himself heard in earnest, and the lieutenant gladly shifted the responsibility, ordered the sergeant to show him on to the captain's tent, and so did it happen that Ingraham and his importunate visitor of that initial night at Washington were brought for an instant face to face in the presence of superior authority.

But that was all. No sooner did the red-sashed officer catch sight of the orderly's pass than he handed it back

and bade him ride on. "Orderlies really should have some distinguishing mark," said he. "Then they wouldn't be held up at every post. You'll have to hurry." Hurry he did, though now he would have been glad to tarry a moment and learn something about this doubly named stranger. Rex was in sore perplexity and distress of mind because of the utter silence,—the inexplicable silence—of the girl he loved. He was stung and strangely worried by the changed tone of Burnham's letters. He had taken instinctive dislike to the self-styled Blunt from the moment of their meeting at Willard's, and for lack of assignable cause was wondering whether that ill-favored person could have had anything to do with those vaguely accusing telegrams. He connected him in some way with the mysterious trouble in which he was involved, and, next to the longing to get at once to New York and to learn from Editha's own lips the secret of her silence, was this newborn craving to clutch this fellow by the throat and shake out of him the story of his share, at least, in the conspiracy against him. It seemed the crisis of his life. It seemed his right, his duty, to probe the situation to its depths, to clear his name of every shadow of suspicion. Yet here he sat in saddle, turning his back on his accusers, if accusation had been made, spurring away from the test instead of to it, all because of that dingy paper he had signed to observe and obey the orders of the officers appointed over him, and one of these had now bidden him ride on.

His nerves were on edge. He was annoyed and angered, and in no mood to listen to further opposition when,

barely a third of a mile beyond, he came to the end of the earthen causeway to a point where several roads went winding through the sloppy low ground,—some toward the camps dotting the slopes beyond the dull hued parapet of Fort Runyon, some to the wooded heights where the white columns of a stately mansion gleamed in the hot sunshine, some to the southward steeples of sleepy old Alexandria, and here, too, at the forks of the road stood opposing sentry, with leveled bayonet, and waiting guardsmen grinning at the joy of bringing a “regular” to bay. “I am Colonel Hunter’s orderly,” he called, “and ordered to waste no moment,” and he waved the paper slip over the sentry’s head in hopes of hastening the sergeant’s coming, but that worthy seemed to rejoice in deliberation, and when at last he had spelled out the words of the pass he professed inability to decipher the signature. “And the lieutenant ain’t here just now to help me,” said the New Englander. “What’s your hurry?”

“The hurry is my orders,” was the indignant answer, and Ingraham was flushing now, with exasperation. “Where is your lieutenant, anyhow?”

“Gone over for a snack at the sutler’s,” answered the non-commissioned officer, with a toss of his head over his broad blue shoulder. “You can’t follow him there, anyhow.”

“Then call for him, or send for him, if you can’t read,” shouted Ingraham, now “mad clear through,” as the sentry swore to it later, and one object of his shouting was to attract attention at the sutler’s, a rambling, roadside



"THE GLEAMING BAYONET WAS CLOSE AT HIS BELT BUCKLE"

shanty, with long counters of unplanned pine, alluringly garnished with all manner of emergency items: pies, peanuts, cakes, fruits, cigars, tobacco, blue flannel garments already turning ruddy, red flannel underwear already turning brown, shirts, shoes, socks, soap, 'kerchiefs, neckties, "Havelocks," caps, fezzes, playing cards, stationery, etc., etc. About the counters clustered a motley array of militiamen from Fort Runyon and the neighboring camps, especially about that section of the establishment where "iced beverages warranted to contain no intoxicant" were being sold in copious lots under the supervision of certain members of the guard, while a side door, opening from within only in response to certain signals from a uniformed guardian stationed without, gave ingress or egress to a favored few, mainly wearers of shoulder straps, whose general appearance warranted the belief that the warrant referred to did not extend to the beverages within.

And, so absorbed were the visitors in their occupation that none of their number gave heed to the excited shout of the orderly, who thereupon did what he had no right to do—began upbraiding the sentry, who was in no wise to blame, and who took the matter so much to heart that the next thing Ingraham knew the gleaming bayonet was close at his belt buckle. Had not his excited bay suddenly backed and swerved, something more than a pin prick would have resulted for both men—the high-bred young collegian turned trooper, the unschooled young factory lad turned sentry, were now in a fury, each considering his high and important function despitefully held by the other.

Perhaps Ingraham was the more unreasoning and unreasonable of the two, for this made the third stop, all needless, and there before him lay Arlington, long mile away beyond the muddy flats, and there behind him, as a quick glance showed, issuing from the bridge came the foremost of the gleaming little cavalcade he had quit across the broad Potomac. At this rate the chances were that, so far from announcing the coming of his division commander, Ingraham would find himself ignominiously trailing in rear of the staff and orderlies. He wasn't himself. Nights of sleepless worry and anxiety, days of drill and labor in the hot summer sun, balks, checks, halts, exasperations, indeed indignities, as it seemed to him—all these had conspired to undermine his strength and overthrow his judgment. The sight of the sergeant of the guard, lazily sauntering back to the tent, leaving him, the colonel's messenger, to the mercy of a factory boy sentry and a grinning squad of comrades, proved the last pound. With the first oath he had been guilty of in many a day, Rex Ingraham struck both spurs furiously into his horse's flanks. The animal sprang madly forward, knocking the sentry to one side, and away went steed and rider, full tilt for the heights, with a swarm of excited guardsmen shouting vengeance behind them.

Old smooth-bore Harper's Ferry muskets were the arms of this particular guard, charged, when loaded at all, with a round ball and three buckshot; sure when discharged to hit something within two hundred yards, but nothing beyond, and before the sentry could recover from the shock

of surprise, the trooper was zigzagging over the muddy flats, full fifty rods away, and then the sentry's musket wasn't loaded, neither were those stacked in front of the tents. The best the guard could do was to tell an explosive story when their officer came hurrying over to inquire the cause of the excitement, and by the time the grim-visaged, swarthy old colonel rode slowly to the spot, his staff and orderlies still remaining discreetly at the rear, that story had attained damaging proportions. In martial matters great consequences often grow from trivial things.

Flushed, heated and angering still, Ingraham at last found the headquarters of Colonel Burnside and an officer who received his message. The colonel himself was not there, but out at the front. Twice again, as he arrived among the swarming camps, inquiring his way, had Ingraham been stopped by sentries or patrol, involving him in further delay. It was no surprise to him, therefore, although it obviously disconcerted the staff officer, to see Colonel Hunter come riding into the open space in front of the headquarters tent, his staff still at his heels. Displeasure made darker the dark face. He merely glanced at Ingraham, without returning his salute, and addressed himself to the officer:—

“Colonel Burnside not here? I sent word ahead. Mr. Cross,” he called, turning abruptly in saddle, “you find the Colonel, and, Captain Bond, you hear what this orderly may have to say.” With that he dismounted, his staff and orderlies following suit, and, entering the nearest tent, the division commander threw off his big black hat and heavy

gauntlets, strange gear for such a day, and lowered himself into a camp chair. Captain Bond stepped forward and, in not unkindly tone, but with curious glance at the young trooper's intelligent face, bade Ingraham leave his horse with a fellow orderly and follow him. Rex was dizzy as he dismounted and felt solid earth beneath his feet,—so dizzy that, as he stood before the young chief of staff he put forth a hand to steady himself by the tent pole, dropped it in the effort to stand attention, found his head swimming, and so, saying, "I beg pardon, sir," again sought support from the tent pole.

"Dizzy?" asked the captain, briefly.

"A little, sir."

"Been drinking?"

"Nothing. It's probably the sun, sir." And again Ingraham's choler was on the rise. There was something so impressively accusing in the captain's manner.

"They charge you with having ridden down a sentry at the post of the guard back there near the bridge. What have you to say?"

"It's probably true, sir. You ordered me to go with speed, yet I was stopped time and again. No one would even look at my pass at that point. I considered it my duty to push ahead and take the chances. It is no fault of mine I got here late. The guards—or their orders—or the system was to blame."

These were unusual words from a man in the ranks, and both man and officer knew it. Such had been the orderly's orders. Such hampering of mounted messengers

had happened and it was high time, as many had remarked, that there was some system by which such men could be allowed to pass sentry posts undelayed. The New Englanders had told their story angrily, excitedly. Their officer declared to Captain Bond that he was coming toward the sentry at the moment it happened, intending to bid him pass the general's orderly at once; but, all on a sudden, cursing the sentry, the orderly had put spurs to his horse and deliberately run the man down. The doctor had ordered the injured man to the hospital, was the report. It all looked black enough for Ingraham, but the young captain had lived with open eyes during his brief term of service, and had noted the reciprocal jealousy and super sensitive conception of their relative value between the sentries on the one hand and orderlies on the other. He knew the tale would bear sifting and knew that he had bidden Ingraham ride at speed. Moreover, here was a man who spoke instant truth, without striving to shift blame or responsibility. Furthermore, here, unless the captain's eyes and ears deceived him,—here was a gentleman in the guise of a trooper, a gentleman suffering from something besides a partisan story.

"I believe you were needlessly held," said he, "and doubtless exasperated. But the case is serious. I may have to take further action, but first I am going to see you are given medical attention." He stepped to the entrance just as a young officer came trotting swiftly into the enclosure. Dismounting at sight of Colonel Hunter, seated under one tent fly and Captain Bond just coming out from

under another, he saluted the first with much precision, and then, with evident embarrassment, approached and accosted the second.

"Captain Bond, I am directed by General Runyon to report, with his compliments, that one of his sentries was defied and knocked down and ridden over by a trooper, claiming to be one of your headquarters orderlies——"

"Here's your man," said Bond, briefly. "And he needs the doctor more than your sentry does."

At sound of the new-comer's voice, Ingraham had started and turned half round, an eager light in his eyes. At sight of the trooper thus turning the young officer as vividly started, a flush of pleasure, of instant recognition, of welcome in his fine, dark eyes. Impulsively his hand went out as he sprang forward. "Rex Ingraham!" he joyously cried; then as suddenly the flush went out, the step faltered, the hand dropped, the voice hushed, and Ingraham, lifted one instant to the skies at sight of a familiar face, at sound of a well-known, cordial voice, sank swiftly back to the depths at the sudden, the ominous shadow that swept over the paling features before him. Loosing its hold on the tent pole, his right hand went up in painful and awkward salute, his lips almost inaudibly framed the words, "Lieutenant Kent," and then Ingraham stood stricken dumb, with the world again giddily spinning, as his old-time friend and classmate turned strangely away, saying brokenly, clumsily only this:

"I supposed you had been sent—you had gone—back to New York."

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT THE LETTERS SAID

THE 71st had received marching orders, together with the rest of the heterogenous array of amateur soldiery assembled in front of Washington. With fatal unanimity the press and the public were shouting "On to Richmond," demanding that a motley force of thirty thousand men that knew little of drill and less of discipline, should sally forth and hew a way through an hundred miles of diversified country and an hundred thousand of brave, united and determined, even though unorganized, men. In drill, perhaps, the Virginians and their allies of the Southern states were no better than their brethren of the North. In armament and equipment they were quite as good. Mr. Floyd had seen to that. In discipline and numbers they were certainly superior, for the Southerner was by nature a soldier, and all the South was up in arms. Moreover, the Virginian was to fight on his own ground in defense of the sacred soil, his altars and his fires, an untold element of strength. British regulars in April, '75, had tried the task of hewing a way through ten miles of farm country and no more than their fighting weight of ragged farm folk, armed with flint-locks and

pitch forks. Disaster resulted, as all the world knows. Now, Northern irregulars (for, barring the batteries of Griffin, Ricketts, a handful of Foot and Marines and Palmer's small squadrons of cavalry, all the little army was made up of militia) were sent to try conclusions with at least an equal force of Southern soldiery, backed by a most enthusiastic people, and how on earth anything but disaster was to be looked for, whether at Bull Run or beyond, puzzles the later day reader. All the same, the Army set forth, and all save a brace of metropolitan battalions, that took occasion to remind Uncle Sam their time had expired when it began to look like a fight, bore certain part in the initial clash. Our friends of the 71st marched well in the van, minus two of their officers known to our readers, Lieutenant Kent, on detached service as aide-de-camp to General Runyon, and Captain John Winn, absent in Washington when the order was issued, and authorized to delay joining just twenty-four hours until the doctors could say whether Trooper Rex Ingraham, of the regular cavalry, could live or must die.

Desperately ill, indeed, had he been,—so ill that in his delirium he had risen against the hospital attendants and striven to fight his way to the cars. So ill, that in his delirium he had raved about Editha Raynor and Ned Burnham and the robbery in New York and of Frenier and of some girl whose name was strange to Winn, though he had heard mention of her home—so ill that when he first began his wild talk, and Winn's name was often on his lips, the surgeon in charge sent word of his plight, and

Winn got leave and came over from camp, and there for the first time learned that his friend, the patient, was also a prisoner under serious charge; that he was to be tried for having assaulted and ridden down a sentry in discharge of his duty. "But this trial may postpone *that*—indefinitely," said the doctor, gravely, and Winn sat sorrowfully by the bedside of the burning, tossing, sometimes raving patient, and heard things that set him to thinking and then to writing—first to Ned Burnham,—finally to Editha.

The letters—two—to the former brought no response, at the time. That matter was settled later. The letter to Miss Raynor was couched in terms less urgent than those to Burnham, but the response came as the fever began to leave poor Rex, and Winn, thinking to be gone a long time instead of back in a week, sealed it, with a copy of his own letter to Miss Raynor, and gave instructions that, when Mr. Ingraham was entirely restored, the packet, together with his letter of explanation to Rex, should then be given him, but not before. Late on the 17th of July he set forth to catch the 71st on the way to Bull Run, and on the 24th he was trundled back to town in a wabby ambulance and the worst kind of a temper, to find that the hole in his leg would keep him in bed the best part of a month, and that Rex Ingraham had got the letter—and a relapse.

Confusion, it seems, had reigned in Washington for days after that unlooked for, yet most probable disaster in front of Manassas. Weak as he was, Ingraham was then on the mend and the alert, and had begged to be made of use

when the bulk of the wounded were brought in and the preparations proved utterly inadequate. They moved him away to another ward, a few belongings with him, and somebody found and gave him those letters, and that night he broke out, no man could say how, and was picked up in the streets near the Baltimore and Ohio station, by a groping patrol, after twenty-four hours of absence and exposure. These letters, found on his person, told part of the story, and led to his prompt return to the hospital but not to health. In worse plight than ever, he now hovered 'twixt life and death, and Winn's sole consolation lay in damning the doctors and denouncing women. It seems that Winn had had previous experiences of his own, but none that belong to this story. All too late he recovered the letters and cursed his folly in entrusting them to anybody. As they had been read by this time by several different men they may as well be reproduced here.

" Cavalry Hospital, Washington, D C.

" July 14th, 1861.

" To MISS EDITHA RAYNOR.

" I am a stranger to you, yet I have seen you many a time and am in no wise surprised at the information given me by Mr. Rex Ingraham, who was brought here quite seriously ill several days ago,—so ill, in fact, that I wrote somewhat urgently to his class-mate, Mr. Burnham, who has recently, I believe, and because of the frequent need of his services at your father's bedside, become an inmate of your house. Letters to Mr. Burnham elicit no response, and I fear that mine have failed to reach him, and that you, therefore, know nothing of Mr. Ingraham's condition.

" Miss Raynor, he has been delirious much of the time for three days, and he raves of you. It is my duty to tell you this, and to

say to you that the doctor cannot assure me of his recovery. Brain fever, they say, is his malady, brought on by mental anxiety and exposure to a blazing sun. Everything that men can do is being done for him. You are the only one on earth who, I believe, can do more. Command me if I can be of service, but my regiment may be ordered to move at any moment, and when it goes I go, and there is no one to whom I can leave him. In sympathy and anxiety,

Your obedient servant,

“JOHN K. WINN,

“Captain, etc.”

And this was the reply:

“New York City, July 15th, 1861.

“MR. JOHN K. WINN.

“My Dear Sir: I found my niece, Miss Raynor, in a state bordering on prostration—total collapse—this afternoon, and if I write to you frankly—even, as it may seem, unkindly, I beg you to consider the feelings of one who looks upon that dear child almost in the light of an only daughter. Ever since the death of her own mother, years ago, she has been to me a precious charge, shielded from every possible care and anxiety until now.

“You are possibly unaware of the fact that her beloved father sustained a serious stroke nearly five weeks ago,—that his condition has been critical and that my niece has suffered much in health and strength through her devotion to him, the hours of nursing, the days and nights of anxiety. But your friend, Mr. Ingraham, knew all this and more,—knew of other matters that gave her sore distress of mind and that were surely preying on her health. We now, for the first time, are able to find explanation of this fact:—that he has written letters to her which, though I have not been permitted to read them, I know have caused her great distress, and which were unwarrantable as coming from him to the only daughter of his best friend and benefactor. It is only charitable to assume that the malady to which you refer had

already told upon his faculties, and that these importunate letters to her were the offspring of a disordered brain.

"One cannot but sorrow that a young man so gifted should be so sorely stricken, but I feel it due to myself, to my niece and to others of our family circle, to say that we are in possession of information proving that, even while enjoying the confidence and the bounty of my beloved brother, he had involved himself with persons of questionable character in an affair that doubtless had much to do with the shock that prostrated Mr. Raynor, and that has at last revealed Mr. Ingraham to us in the true light. Under these circumstances, an appeal to us in his behalf is most inopportune. Even had there been, as you seem to imagine, anything resembling an engagement, or even an understanding, between my niece and your unfortunate friend, you must appreciate that it would be impossible for her to leave her sick fathers' side. But, as matters stand, while we deplore the situation, it is not one in which my niece can be allowed to appear, and in her name and in that of our family, I must beg we be spared further communication upon the subject. Very sincerely,

"A. R. FAIRBANKS."

And now while Rex Ingraham was gasping in the torrid, humid heat, his life hanging by a thread, and Winn himself was finding existence barely endurable, the 71st went home for muster out, many of its members finding their way to the Columbian to shake their comrade's hand, to wish him speedy recovery and another commission. But there were two officers, long time friends and classmates of Ingraham's, for whose coming Winn looked in vain. Up to the moment the regiment marched away to the station neither Kent nor Tracy put in an appearance, and these were the men whom Winn counted on to see

Rex righted on their return to New York. These were the men, he had said to himself who would surely seek to learn the truth about him, to hunt up Burnham, find what he knew and—but somehow Winn had become imbued with distrust of Burnham. He felt, rather than knew, that Burnham must have received his letters begging him to come, and that the appeal had been ignored. But Winn had not yet begun to dream of the depth of the plot in which Ingraham was involved. When Kent failed to appear, he sent a message saying he wished to see him, and was told that both Kent and Tracy were in town that very day, besieging New York senators and others in authority with appeals for commissions in the regular service. Scores of the Seventh were already so honored, why not some of the 71st? To Winn's wrath and amaze, they went home to share the ovation accorded the regiment on its return, contenting themselves with messages and promises to write to him, but never a word of mention did they utter as to Ingraham. It seemed incredible.

The papers came telling of their fine reception and the triumphant march up Broadway and then down the Bowery to the old armory, and there were letters presently from certain of the officers, but not a line from either of the Columbiads, and now Ingraham was worse. He seemed slowly drifting away through sheer weakness and exhaustion, and Winn's spirit rose in wrath. He had no friend in power. He was a stranger to senators, to representatives, to everybody in fact in official life. He be-thought him of a gallant and genial regular, the battery

commander who had taken such interest in Rex on his first arrival, but alas, he, too, lay severely wounded as a result of that hapless Sunday struggle, a prisoner in Libby, while his darling guns were now turned against the very flag they were wrought to defend. He bethought him of the one general who had found time to say a cheery word to him as he was borne bleeding from the field. Alas, that general had had the audacity to say it might take years, and would take hundreds of thousands of men, to whip the South, and he was called crazy and sent to Kentucky. The surgeons were doing all they could, in such ghastly heat and discomfort, for all their patients, Ingraham included. But they shook their heads when Winn begged for better news of him. And then one day, about a week after the regiment got home, there came a letter addressed to him, in a hand he had seen before, on three missives that, still unopened, had come for Rex. He read it eagerly.

"DEAR SIR: This, by the hand of Brother James, will tell you that he has written three letters for me to Mr. Ingraham, and only to-day, through Mr. Corporal Chauncy, of your company, did we know why no answer came. Brother James says I should write to you, as Mr. Chauncy says you are with Mr. Ingraham, and he is too sick. This is to say I have kept my promise to Mr. Ingraham, and so has Brother James, and we have kept away from Mr. Raynor's house, and not tried to see Mr. B. there, but he hasn't treated us right or done as Mr. Ingraham promised that he should—he keeps away from 37th street so we can't get to see him, and he hasn't sent the money Mr. Ingraham promised, and the other is gone, and if we can't get it and nobody won't listen to us, I must

go see the young lady herself, though I know I promised Mr. Ingraham, but only because he gave me what he did and promised I should have more. Now, Mr. Winn, if you're a friend of Mr. Ingraham's you ought to help me, for I'm poor and desperate, and my mother is sick and the children, and James says I must have justice or he'll take me to them that will see I get it, and I am yours respectfully,

"ROSIE MALLOY."

"P. S.—When you answer this send it care of James Malloy, Esq., and he'll get it at Station 'D' near where he works. I can write a little but do not like to."

When the doctor made his rounds, an hour later, he puzzled over Winn's quickened pulse and asked him what he had been doing to fret himself into a fever, and even while they were talking, and Winn was urging that Ingraham should be moved into a cooler spot, there fell a sudden hush that even in that long, sun-streaked, bare-walled room, where people walked on tip-toe and spoke in murmurs, attracted instant notice, and fifty pairs of eyes, some suffused with fever, some dim with despond, turned inquiringly toward the arched doorway where stood a little group of visitors.

Some were officers in some sort of uniform,—the long, loose, blue flannel sack, civilian in cut and of most unsoldierly coolness and comfort, being a favorite. Some two or three were plain citizens in alpaca or brown linen. Three were women—a middle aged matron and two young ladies. Finally, central figure of the group, a strange contrast because of his commanding stature and lank, ungainly form, and the fact that while the others were

dressed in loose, summer garments, he stood towering in glossy black, with the tallest type of black silk hat in his big, bony hand. Early as it was in the war days, every man knew him at a glance. The President had come to visit his sick and wounded "boys."

Winn's cot was near the door and Winn was one of the first accosted. At the surgeon's word, "Captain Winn, Mr. President, 71st New York, shot through the leg at Bull Run," Mr. Lincoln bent well nigh double in the effort to reach the patient's hand, his homely, somber face softening with the sweetness of his smile.

"We have heard of you, sir. Ah! Did I squeeze too hard?" for Winn had visibly winced. "You see I've had tougher things to grip so many a year, I sometimes forget. And then, one feels like squeezing the hand of a hero. How's the leg, captain? How soon can we have him up again, doctor?"

"I fear my marching days are done for good, Mr. President," said Winn, ruefully.

"Not if we put you on horseback," was the quick response. "And that is my purpose, providing you'll accept. Perhaps there's something else I can do for you."

"You can do—everything, almost, sir, for a friend of mine. He's nearly gone with a relapse in brain fever. He is under general charges for riding down a sentry before he had learned anything about their sacred character, and if ever a lad needed to get back to New York it is he. He may not pull through this attack at all, but if he should, there is a worse one waiting for him at home that he's got

to meet and crush or it'll crush him. He hasn't a friend here but me. He has, or had, a host of them at home. If he gets well and that court-martial can be staved off for a few weeks until he can straighten matters *there*—at home—the court, I believe, will acquit him. If he has to face that first I believe it will kill him.”

“Where is he?” asked the President, who had listened to every word, and, guided by a surgeon, he tip-toed away, the eyes of the whole room following him. They saw him bending again over a rumpled cot, close to the open westward window, saw him exchanging murmured words with the medical officer, and then, stretching forth his muscular hand, he laid it pityingly on the clammy forehead of the unconscious young soldier. The fever had spent its force, but the exhausted, over-taxed heart had well nigh lost the last vestige of power. One way or another a day must settle it for all time. “A regular, you tell me?” those nearest him heard the President whisper.

“A regular—*now*,” was the doctor's answer. “Yet, Captain Winn tells me, a college graduate and the orator of his class not two months ago.”

“Rode down one of Runyon's sentries, did he?—riding for that old dragoon Hunter?” continued Mr. Lincoln, edging noiselessly to the doorway giving on the broad veranda, the doctor and one or two of his retinue following. “Now Hunter himself is wounded and laid by the heels. Three weeks ago he was for cashiering somebody for not riding down somebody else out there near Sudley Springs. Possibly those were his orders to this boy, and

if so—Well, you tell Captain Winn his friend shan't suffer injustice at least,—tell him we'll get them both well first and see what can be done for them later."

And then he glanced back toward the lower entrance where the ladies were still hovering about the wounded officer. One of them, a girl of nineteen, perhaps, was at the moment at Winn's bedside, and Winn lay looking up into the lovely, sympathetic face. A whimsical smile flitted across the rugged features of the President.

"Winn doesn't know it," said he, "but he's in bigger danger at this minute than he's been in since Bull Run," then lowering his voice so that only the doctor heard. "And that girl's own young man, they tell me, is fighting at this minute on the Southern side, not twenty miles away."

CHAPTER IX

STRANGE WITNESSES AT BULL RUN

OVERLOOKING the straggling city, lying beyond a mile of level fields, there stood on the wooded heights to the north a fine old mansion, its colonnaded portico gleaming white amidst the verdure in the slanting sunshine of the summer afternoon. August was all but gone. September was but a few hours away. "Little Mac" had already begun to make and mould what was soon to be the grand Army of the Potomac, whose snowy tents were spread over every open space within the limits of the District and dotted the northward banks of the noble river far away toward the mountain gateway at Harper's Ferry.

The state militia had disappeared. The first great levies of volunteers, five hundred thousand strong, had been rushed to the front, and those destined for service about the national capital, at least, were being drilled, equipped and organized by a master hand. Across the Potomac, in plain view of the defenders, the flag of the exultant South was floating from the crest of Munson's Hill, but between it and the banks of the mile-wide stream were now long lines of field works, planned by skillful engineers, brist-

ling with black-mouthed guns, fringed with tangled abattis and manned by thousands of sturdy soldiery, burning with eagerness to retrieve the disaster of July. Within the limits of the city itself, every park was a bustling camp, every hall a barrack and every level space a drill ground. On all the surrounding heights to the north and beyond, burned "the watch fires of an hundred circling camps."

And here in front of the old Porter mansion, just referred to, the pacing sentry looked out upon a stately ceremony on the plain below, where a little brigade of regulars had been drawn up for review, south of the 14th street road, and with their field glasses a party of volunteer officers, a dozen in all, had gathered on the portico, interested spectators of the distant yet stirring scene. The southeast wind, moist and warm from the lower Potomac, brought to their ears the roll of the drums in salute to a major general, and of major generals that early in the war, regular or volunteer, there was only one in saddle now about Washington—"Little Mac" to whom the impulsive, impressionable soldiery were already looking with almost adoring eyes. Of brigadiers there were so many that some were still without commands, yet here, over toward Tenally town, beyond the wooded banks of Rock Creek, were assembled in force the regiments of the Pennsylvania Reserves, under a leader of their own state, while along the heights of Kalorama were men and regiments enough for a big division, all dominated by a single star.

A motley array were these, in some respects. Four strong battalions of far Westerners were still wearing the

gray in which they had been garbed at home. Beyond them camped the kilted Highlanders of New York, re-enlisted for the war, and quickly shedding both kilts and plaid "trews" for the somber uniform of Uncle Sam. Nearer the broad highway, the Fourteenth street road, were camped the First Long Island, the so-called "Brooklyn Phalanx," their sentries swapping soldier pleasantries with those of the Second Fire Zouaves of Gotham across the dusty thoroughfare, and watching with speculative eyes the efforts of another neighbor—a strange, foreign-schooled but most soldierly colonel—to teach soldier discipline to his raw Pensylvanians. Between the guard lines of the "Keystones" and the far-away tents of the Westerners lay a broad open space, only just vacated by the 14th and 15th Massachusetts, and speedily to be reoccupied by the 19th, and while every command was out and hard at company drill, field and staff officers, a dozen strong, had happened in about brigade headquarters, and were deep in discussion of the spirited ceremony on the plain below. A little distance away, around at the westward side of the mansion, half a dozen horses were switching their tails in the shade of the trees, watched by a brace of drowsy orderlies, and, jogging up the narrow, winding lane from the roadway at the foot of the southwest slope, came still another officer, whose glossy broadcloth and glistening buttons told, as did his untanned face, that he had but recently come afield.

And yet, at sight of him, men of higher rank stepped forward in manifest respect to greet and welcome. An

orderly, summoned by the prompt call of an aid, came running to take his rein. The brigade surgeon sprang to his stirrup to help him dismount; the adjutant general hastened to lend a hand. The brigade commander himself arose and came forward, a glow in his dark eyes, a smile on his bearded face. Slowly and stiffly the new arrival lowered himself from saddle, and then, limping a bit, but laughingly and even blushing declining assistance, tramped sturdily up the flag stones to salute the general, who shook his hand with hearty cordiality, and hailed him with: "Welcome, Major Winn." Another year and wounded heroes were no novelty, but even in that first September of the war we were still petting the fellows who had felt the sting of Southern lead at First Bull Run.

"Rather a risky experiment, major," said the general. "I wonder at the doctor's letting you mount so soon."

"He didn't," answered Winn, half laughing, half rueful, as he sank into a chair. "He knew nothing about it, and I've only ridden half a mile at slow walk on the easiest old circus horse about Washington. They led him close to the steps and I just lowered myself to his back."

Even as he spoke, Winn's eyes were glancing from face to face, as though in search of one he thought to see, and the general read his thought and anticipated his question.

"Carden has gone over to Colonel Stevens's camp," said he. "We shall have him back in twenty minutes. He has heard, I think, and was going to take you driving. But you will not attempt to travel yet awhile, I hope."

"They have made me major of a 'Foreign Legion,'"

answered Winn, with a whimsical smile. "It is queer to step from a company of the American Guard to the left wing of the Prussians, but if they are as good soldiers as their colonel looks to be, I am in luck. The one fear I have is that they would rather that all of their officers were German. I'm the only Yankee that I know of, yet the colonel begs me to join as soon as possible. That is why I'm trying to get fit to travel. If this—unhappy business of Ingraham's were only settled——" and Winn looked appealing at the brigadier.

They had taken camp chairs and were seated at the edge of the broad portico, the other officers drawing a little apart. They were evidently well known to each other. Moreover, Carden, the aide-de-camp referred to, was a Columbia classmate of Ingraham. The general had already received more than one letter from the President of Columbia urging his interest and protection for Columbia's one representative in the rank and file of the regular cavalry. The story of Ingraham's luckless experience had been talked over by every man on duty at headquarters. From brigade commander down to mounted orderly they had all heard of it,—how Runyon's field-officer-of-the-day had preferred charges of a most serious character, how Hunter's staff adjutant had disclaimed all responsibility and declared the orderly had received no warrant for his impetuous act, how court-martial had thus far been averted only by Ingraham's relapse and most serious condition, though it was known that there had been a presidential hint to the effect that it would be only fair to let the pris-

oner recover some of his strength before they deprived him of all; and, now that he was convalescing, others, too, were pleading "extenuating circumstances," and others still talking of graver entanglements,—stories of complications at home far more important than these at the front. The latter concerned him only as a soldier. The former stained him as a gentleman.

And it was in this affair that Winn now found himself vehemently, vitally interested. His was a strange, an intense nature. Ingraham's personal business was really none of his, yet, once started in an enterprise of any kind, John Winn was a man whose moral fibre demanded that it should be carried through. He did nothing half heartedly. He taught, fought, drilled, loved and hated with all his soul, and having learned to like Ingraham, having found him, as he believed, tricked and wronged by those who should have been his faithful friends, and deserted and spurned by the girl who should have been his devoted love, his big heart fairly brimmed with eagerness to battle for him, and having entered on the quarrel he would bear it to the bitter end. Debarred by his own wounds from going in person to demand justice for his stricken and still unconscious friend, he had bethought him of the general commanding at Kalorama and his Columbia aid. No man of Winn's social set at home moved in the same sphere with Editha Raynor, but Carden was one of the elect of old Society days. He was welcomed everywhere, knew everybody he cared to know, had a sister, in fact, who was on terms of social intimacy with Miss Raynor, and Winn

had lost no time in writing a line to Carden, begging him to come and see him at the Columbian Hospital. It brought the general, too, and all three men had gone with the doctor to Rex's bedside and hovered awhile about the exhausted, heavily sleeping patient. Then Carden had written home, and then Miss Carden had undertaken a pilgrimage from Watch Hill where she had gone for sea breezes and bathing, and now that Ingraham was sitting up and beginning to ask questions, Winn felt that the time for action had come. Something must be done to set him right or he would go wrong irrevocably. That morning had brought a letter from the adjutant of his new regiment, the —— New York Volunteers, winding up with the significant paragraph that the colonel sincerely hoped Major Winn would join within the week, as there was most urgent need of his services, and this, the newly appointed field officer handed to his friend, the big brigade's commander. The latter read reflectively. "They need you greatly," said he, "yet I venture to say that you should not go to them when there is every probability they will soon be coming here to you. Meantime we must see to Ingraham."

In the midst of the chat who should return but Carden, dismounting at the side entrance and at sight of Winn's untanned face, the aide's went a shade paler, so much did he hate to have to tell his news. In college days he had belonged to a different set—had worn the badge of a society much at variance with the Sigma Chi and had really seen but little outside of chapel and class rooms of either

Ingraham or Burnham. But he had heard Winn's story with excited interest and had written with characteristic impetuosity. He desired that Miss Carden should take either her mother or an available aunt and an early occasion to visit New York, the elder lady to offset the formidable Mrs. Fairbanks, the sister to assail Miss Raynor with circumstantial account of Ingraham's critical condition. Carden could not be brought to believe that Editha Raynor was a free agent in her virtual repudiation of Rex Ingraham. Carden believed that that was mainly the doing of an ambitious and dominant, if not domineering, woman. Carden had a romantic idea that a girl as lovely as Editha Raynor could by no means be stony hearted. Miss Carden, who adored her brother, two years her junior in years, was his slave in everything except her views of other women. She could have written her reply and given valuable opinions without stirring from Watch Hill, but she went as he demanded, and failed as she expected. The Raynor homestead was closed and in the hands of a caretaker. The family and most of the servants were gone. Dr. Tracy, who was finally found, said that John Raynor had so far improved as to warrant his being taken to the St. Lawrence. They had gone to Montreal and thence to Quebec. Eminent specialists had urged a sea voyage under sail. The chances were that by this time, on the fine English packet *Endymion*, they were beating out of the Gulf, bound for the blue Atlantic and beyond—John Raynor, with his devoted daughter whose health had suffered greatly, their household supervisor, Mrs. Fairbanks, and

their inseparable attendant, Mr. Ed. Burnham. For further particulars Miss Carden was referred to Mr. Watson, business agent for both John Raynor and his substantial sister. And this was the news that Carden had to bring to Major Winn as the sun declined to the crest of the dim Catoctins at the westward horizon, and this the news poor Winn had yet to tell his soldier friend and fellow sufferer, as twilight settled down upon the scene and the band of the Brooklyn Phalanx began its sweet evening serenade.

The general had insisted on Winn's staying for supper—they dined then, soldier fashion, at midday,—and then when the carriages began to arrive, as they often did from Washington, singled out the modest vehicle wherein sat the President, with Secretary Seward, and after a little talk with them had beckoned Winn to join him, and again the homely features of the great Westerner softened and glowed as the wounded New Yorker limped forward to take the big, bony hand outstretched to welcome him. "The General has been telling me of your call to duty," said he, then with whimsical twitch about his lips: "I don't know just what McClellan's going to do with these new regiments, but he knows and may be I can get him to tell me where yours is going, and so save you the double trip. How's your young friend at hospital, major?"

"Propped up in bed to-day, sir, but very weak," answered Winn, marveling a bit that the commander-in-chief should have to ask for information as a favor,—he learned a lot within another year. "And it's too late to accomplish anything at home." Winn did not dare believe the

President had remembered. He was amazed to find that the President had.

"I understand you to say matters there were of more consequence than these charges brought against him here?" asked the President, while a curious knot of soldiers, officers and men, stood looking on a dozen yards away.

"I did, sir, and the people to set him right have left there and gone to Canada and sea voyaging."

The Secretary of State, who had been chatting with the General, looked quickly round. "Did you hear the name of the vessel, major? Is this the party that sailed on the *Endymion*?"

Wondering more, Winn answered yes, and Mr. Seward glanced significantly at the President. Then, as though unwilling to confess to anxiety, remarked, "We hear of certain Southern people who are also passengers,—for the benefit of *their* health. They have doubtless met before."

Half an hour later when driven carefully over to the hospital in a springy carriage, Winn limped slowly, apprehensively toward Ingraham's bed, and was surprised to see him faintly smiling. Two feminine forms were only just vanishing through the northward doorway, and after them the major gazed until they were out of sight in outer darkness. "They asked for you," whispered Rex, wearily, "Miss Langdon and her sister. They said they had been here before, but I couldn't remember." Ingraham seemed rather more bored than benefited. He was still so languid and inert, so indifferent to all about him, so urgent with

inquiry as to people at home. Two days only had he seemed really mending, and these two days had been filled with questions Winn knew not how to answer. This day he had promised to see Carden, and now answer of some kind had to come, for again came Ingraham's demand both for information and for letters,—letters from what he still sometimes called home, and Winn knew he was as yet too weak to be told the entire truth, still too weak to bear the shock of reading such a letter as that to Carden, still too near the danger point to stand the test of hearing that those whom he had loved and served had gone utterly out of his life, leaving him in his extremity without so much as a word of pity, of sympathy or sorrow or farewell. Winn looked into the haggard, hungry eyes that sought his face with such piteous appeal, and lied as best he could.

“Yes, old boy,” said he, “I had one letter full of interest in you, but fuller of concern. Miss Raynor, it said, had been so prostrated that writing was impossible, and Carden has heard from them. They were going to try a sea voyage to tone her up. Get well now and leave that other business to me. What about Burnham? Oh, he's gone with them! He has to take care of the old man, you know.” With that, declaring the doctor was signalling to him, perhaps the one true thing he had said, Winn broke away to the north piazza. There stood the surgeon in charge and with him, in the dim light of the gas lamp, the two ladies who so lately had been at Ingraham's bedside—the two girls who, with their mother, had appeared for the first time before his eyes the day the President, with his

simple, almost humble retinue, had visited the hospital. There was the sweet, smiling face into which the wounded officer had gazed as he lay bandaged, practically bound and helpless,—the face of Alice Langdon. Winn needed no reminder. She had thrown aside the great, soft, broad-brimmed, circular hat of straw, and it hung by its ribbons before her like some suspended shield, as she stood at the steps in the quaint costume of the time,—the voluminous expanse of flounced skirts; the trim little zouave jacket, with the white waist of soft, sheeny dimity; the full sleeves, gathered at the wrist and a low lace collar rolling from the snow white throat. Her light, lustrous hair, rippling away on each side from the part at the middle, was brushed back in heavy rolls about the tiny ears and then, gathered in a beaded net, hung low at the back of the neck. How any girl could look pretty in such a garb passeth the understanding, and baffles the artists of the present day, but John Winn thought, and most men called her, beautiful; and her lovely, girlish face; her dark hazel eyes with their heavy, arching brows and fringing lashes; the soft bloom of her rounded cheeks and the really bewitching curves of her mouth—all justified the claim. “He looked upon her with a soldier’s eye” that told no little of the fervent admiration in his soul, and she saw and colored deeply, and half withdrew the timidly extended hand.

The elder it was who broke the silence and explained:

“Forgive us, Major Winn, but Dr. Dallas feared we might disturb his patients and thought best to beckon you here. We heard—mother heard—that you had met a kins-

man of ours,—at least we so regard him—Edouard Frenier, who was here late in June, and we heard—at least we were told—you had met again—since then,” and Miss Langdon’s embarrassment was almost painful.

Winn came promptly to the rescue. He at least had not heard the presidential reference to the dangers that beset him the first time he looked into the dark eyes of Miss Alice Langdon. He glanced thither one instant now, but they were veiled and downcast.

“I know of Mr. Frenier,” he answered, courteously, “but it was Mr. Ingraham, my friend, on whom he called at Willard’s, not on me. I saw him that night, but not to speak to. I doubt if I should know him if we were to meet again.”

A swift glance was exchanged between the sisters,—a glance of surprise, perhaps of relief. “Then you have not seen him—since?” asked the elder, quickly, almost eagerly. “You have no knowledge of him? You are—sure? Oh, I beg your pardon! You must think it strange that I should be so persistent, but mother heard that you had,—that you had seen and spoken with him. No word has reached us in—quite a while, and she was anxious because she and Madame Frenier were at school together, devoted friends, you know, and he had made our house his home. Mother had hoped to come to you herself, but she has been ailing this week. Our house is quite near, and if we should send the carriage to-morrow *could* you come and see mother,—just a little while?”

Up to this moment the younger sister had hardly mur-

mured a word. Now she lifted her eyes to his, yet did not speak, and by this time an odd train of thought had started, and now was whirling swiftly through the bewildered soldier's brain. He had had only a flitting glance at Frenier the night they so nearly collided in the corridor at Willard's. He had been more especially impressed by the burly, florid-faced, commercial looking "gent" who came blustering and declaiming excitedly by the young Creole's side. That fellow, at least, was not soon to be forgotten, and when Winn learned from Ingraham what had been the mission of the two he felt that it was unlikely that either would ever come to claim the letter sought for. Then, one day, weeks afterwards, or possibly only days, he had heard that coarse voice again, somewhere along a hot, dusty, Virginia roadway, when men were falling out of ranks on every side and swarming over the farm enclosures in search of fruit or water, and a bristly-bearded, sun-tanned, bulky cad, in a big sutler's wagon, was shouting tempting offers of cooling drinks and watermelon for men that had money. And then, that broiling Sunday when, hours after the appointed time, their brigade was sent in across the muddy Run, there, close to the roadside again was that alluring salesman, with scores of thirsty soldier souls clamoring about him for credit, ready to pledge their pay at a dollar a drink, if he would but trust and listen. Winn batted some few men back into ranks with the flat of his sword, and damned the sutler for getting in the way. And then, six hours later, when in turmoil and confusion and panic, the raw, unseasoned militia

came tumbling and tearing and cowering down the opposite bank and crowding across the old stone bridge, and wounded men were shrieking for aid, and captains cursing whole companies for cowards; while many a wretch was cutting the traces of ambulance and wagon teams, mounting a horse and clattering away, Winn, helped along by a brother officer and one devoted sergeant, sore and faint and bleeding, caught sight of his sutler obstacle of the earlier morning, his stock depleted, his horses gone, his wagon stalled by the roadside, squatting on a stump and cheerfully, volubly jeering and reviling the fleeing mob, and by his side stood a slender, dark-eyed, fine-featured young fellow, silent and observant, the only two men to be seen at the moment not doing their best to get to the rear,—the only two to seem utterly indifferent whether the “Black Horse Cavalry” got them or not.

And seeing Winn's exhausted state, the younger man had shoved the big one off the stump and bidden the two conductors seat their wounded friend a moment while he fetched some water. What else happened Winn could not say. He had fainted from loss of blood and, the next he knew, was in a jolting ambulance. The meeting by the roadside faded from his memory, not again to be renewed until he stood here in the presence of Alice Langdon.

CHAPTER X

STRANGE SYMPTOMS AT BROOKSIDE

THERE were campfires blazing along the hillsides, and the city lights were blinking in the middle distance, while the September moon shone serenely down upon the broad, gleaming bosom of the farther Potomac. Across the wooded ravine to the east and at the crest of the opposite slope, a white colonnaded portico glistened in the silvery rays, and there the band of some Eastern regiment was filling the soft air with sweet melody, alternating with the martial strains, wafted through the night from the tented city of the Western troops farther across the broad plateau. It had been a day of soldier excitement and rejoicing, for "Little Mac" had spent hours reviewing the great brigade, and in each regiment there were ready tongues to swear that he had said that, while the rest of the command might be all very well, this particular regiment far outclassed its fellows in drill and discipline, all of which went home in "letters from the front," to be published in many a bustling town, and bring a thrill of pride and patriotism to a host of hearts, rejoicing that the great young general should show such appreciation of its chosen braves, sent forth to fight the nation's

battle. It was a night of soldier excitement and rejoicing, too, about headquarters at the big, white mansion, for something had been let fall from the lips of the keen young major general to the effect that for this brigade, at least, there might speedily be active service. Therefore, be prepared.

But while all was keen, if suppressed, excitement about, and lively, even boisterous enthusiasm along the crowded camps, here, nestling among the shade trees of a pretty grove, with the plashing waters of a tiny brook lulling the echoes to sleep and singing soft accompaniment to the distant sound of mirth and music, a charming country homestead lay embowered, the dim lights from the open casement betraying its existence, but in no wise shining forth allurements to the outer world. Brookside, home of the Langdons, sought no other visitors this night, for it bade fair to be the last that Major Winn should spend within the limits of the defenses of Washington, and Mrs. Langdon had many a question yet to ask him.

Nor could she ask him now, for he was seated there in the moonlight on the steps, looking up, as we have seen him look before, into the radiant face of Alice Langdon, who had been singing sweet, low-toned melodies, old Spanish songs, for the benefit of still another soldier guest, reclining in the great broad invalid chair that had once been a favorite of the husband and father now gathered to his ancestors. Pale, languid and sad at heart, sick body and soul, in his slow convalescence, Rex Ingraham had been with difficulty persuaded to take advantage of

Dr. Dallas's permission and drive with Major Winn to spend an hour under the roof of Dr. Dallas's one surviving sister, the widow of Judge Langdon, once of the supreme court of the District. With difficulty persuaded the first time, with less the second, with little the third, and finally with none at all, Rex Ingraham had found rest and comfort, if not peace and content, being ministered to by three women, each charming in her way.

"At this rate," said the surgeon, on this particular morning, "we can have you fit for duty again in less than a fortnight. At the rate you *were* going there is no telling where you might have landed."

For the time being it was very pleasant for a private trooper of the Union to land on the broad piazza of Brookside, and most unusual. In all its previous history Brookside had known no such event, yet the cavalry in the person of Trooper Ingraham was very much in evidence and possession now, and feeling much more at home in every way than did Major Winn in even one. Winn could not keep his eyes off Alice Langdon. His had been a busy life, one much given to labor and little to love. He had met his fate, he thought, in early college days when smiled upon by a professor's daughter. As he rose in her regard he fell in that of the professor's, as well as in the professor's hobby, analytical geometry. He had to leave his Alma Mater, and his sweetheart, in his junior year, for the death of his father left him with scanty means and serious responsibilities. They parted vowing eternal fidelity, he and she,—he to earn a home and fortune for her, she to wait

for him until he had it. A really pretty girl was she, and waiting proved monotonous. It isn't hard to wait and watch and pray when a girl has nothing else to do and none to tempt her do anything else. But here was a college full of appreciative young men, unenlightened as to Winn, and when one appeared with the home and fortune ready made, her inclination went out to him, even as it had to Winn, who took his loss less philosophically than he did five years thereafter—when next he saw her. However much she had changed for the better in worldly station, she had changed for the worse in womanly grace. Few women would knowingly exchange beauty for wealth. Few men, perhaps, would lament their chosen one's change of heart could they foresee such utter change of feature. Winn had been a woman hater just five years when resignation came to him at sight of his former flame. And now his soul was pliable, his heart was malleable once more, and Alice Langdon had come to bid him rejoice that he had so long since been rejected. When Jean Ingelow declared that she had lived to thank God that many of her prayers had been unanswered, she never dreamed how many men were in the same boat—only they do not like to mention it.

A sturdy soldier was John Winn,—a square man and a true. He would have gone into the army when new regiments were raised in '55 had he had any influence and no responsibilities. He had abundant influence now, for his state was "back of him," and in matters of military preferment then, as later, the question at the war office was not

so much as to his past services as to his present senators,—not so much what's behind him as *who*. New York was eager to reward her earliest heroes in the field, before custom had staled all sentiment. Winn's prospects were as good as those of any man of his grade in the volunteer service, and his home duties were now, happily, much less. He was free to serve his country to his heart's content, and had been full of eagerness to join his new regiment, now *en route* to the front, but the surgeons had set their seal against his earlier going, and now, when their assent was gained, the longing was lacking. John Winn's heart had all been in his soldier duty. Now who could say how much of it lay here at the pretty, slender feet of the girl who, seated on the upper step and close beside him, her little white hand, whiter in the moonlight, sweeping the strings of her guitar, was singing softly to the blue-eyed soldier, dreaming in that reclining chair.

There was an old song—a sad, silly old song that love sick swains were given to crooning in those days, and this it was that kept strumming in Rex Ingraham's dull ears, for within the day gone by Winn had had to tell him all that he had learned about the Raynors, had had to yield to him the few letters that had come during his long and serious illness, most of them from importunate Rosie and her now most truculent brother, had had to show him Mrs. Fairbanks's final missive, and then, by way of comfort, had told him how he had once pinned all his faith and fondness on the sleeve of a girl,—how he, too, had been flouted, and yet had lived to bless the day that brought such bitter sor-



"HER LITTLE WHITE HAND, WHITER IN THE MOONLIGHT, SWEEPING
THE STRINGS OF HER GUITAR"

row when he later saw what he had so barely missed. Ingraham had answered little. Perhaps he had more than half expected what was coming, so much of it had been foreshadowed ere he broke down under the strain. But silence seemed to favor thinking, and silent he had remained for nearly an hour, hearing, perhaps, the mellowed music of the distant bands, the sound of far-off cheering, the murmur of the gentle voices, the sweeter, softer melody close at hand, and all the time, no matter what the words of the song she sang, his heart was throbbing to the sentimental drivel of that then new-made ballad:

"I am dreaming, sadly dreaming,
Of the love that once was mine."

when if he had thought it out, as he should have done, he could have seen that *if* that love had once been his it was only once and for an incredibly short time—a mere spasm of emotional insanity, perhaps, that prompted a beautiful girl, unwooed, unwon, yet bewildered at thought of parting, dazzled by his sudden and triumphant success, and, finally, broken by her anxiety and grateful for his fond and fervent sympathy, to yield herself a moment to his clasping arms, to even surrender for that delirious instant her lips to his passionate kisses. With better reason, far better, could he have been upbraiding his faithless chum, but even as Alice Langdon's sweet, low voice, again uplifted, trolled the love song of Lorena, Juanita, Zarifa, or some one of the score then dear to maiden hearts, he was still yielding to the spell of the vapid ballad of his student

days and dreaming, sadly dreaming when, before he knew or dreamed it, the time to act had come.

Mrs. Langdon's pet watch dog, a close cropped, lop-eared St. Bernard, sprawled on the veranda at her feet, after one or two premonitory sniffs, had sprung suddenly to the edge of the porch and then gone charging off into the shrubbery, challenging some unseen or imagined intruder.

"He used to lie here by the hour and never move," said Mrs. Langdon, "mainly, I suppose, because no one ever came near us at night; but now, with all the camps so near, and the fruit trees close to the fence, it is a temptation to soldiers."

Winn straightened up. "It may be soldiers now," said he. "Even green apples tempt the average lad, especially those that live on soldier rations. I'll stump round there and support Blondo."

He was gone some time. Nor did Blondo return; nor did they hear further sound from either. Blondo ceased his challenge much before the major could have reached him, satisfied apparently that the country was safe. The drums and fifes were playing tattoo in a dozen regimental camps about them, and Alice, who had ceased singing, again took up her guitar and her fresh young voice was uplifted, though controlled and sweet and low, singing a strain of "Il Bacio." And then an ambulance from the hospital drove up to the front gate, before they heard the major's voice again. When they did so he was speaking to the ambulance driver. When he left them he had gone

toward the orchard at the northwest side, and almost at his first words, Agatha Langdon, the elder sister, arose, went down the steps and out into the moonlight to listen.

"Did two men—civilians—in straw hats, pass you in the lane?" they heard him say.

"No men at all, sir, *in* the lane. Out on the road there were lots of fellows going back to camp. I was to give the doctor's compliments to the major and say no letters had come with the evening mail, and there was no hurry."

Winn came walking slowly up the gravel path, still favoring that right foot. Miss Langdon would have been the first to meet and accost him had she stayed, but she had not.

"I wonder what Blondo has found and why he doesn't return," they had heard her say, as though to herself, and she, too, in turn quietly slipped away into the shrubbery. It was Alice to whom Winn addressed himself, his grave and somewhat somber face softening as he spoke.

"You are like Orpheus," said he, "The rocks and trees dance at sound of your voice."

She looked up wondering. "I do not understand," said she.

"You stopped singing a moment when Blondo and I went scouting, and we found nothing to explain his excitement,—at least I found nothing, for he has not yet reported. I thought some of those scamps of ours might be robbing the orchard, but found nobody. Then you began that waltz song, and then—what do you suppose? That big door at the west side of the barn began slowly revolv-

ing. It was tight shut when I passed it, and Prince, your old coachman, came out at the moment from the door of his quarters, candle in hand, to see what was the matter. He said nobody had been in the barn since supper time,—no soldiers had been around and nobody else except ‘two gentlemen in straw hats, inquiring the way to the Porter mansion.’ No, he was sure they weren’t soldiers, they were ‘just gentlemen,’ he said. Observe the distinction.” But Alice Langdon was not smiling now, nor was her mother, who leaned forward in her easy chair. They wished to hear more, but Winn had no more to tell.

“But—the door?—what made it?” asked the younger sister, and there was anxiety in her tone, despite effort to laugh it away.

“Who knows?” said Winn. “Prince didn’t wish to explore—thought it might be ha’nts. I took his lantern and looked in. Nothing there but the big carriage and the little cart,—nothing that could open the door. It was your voice that did it, don’t you see?” And Winn turned again to Alice, from whose hands the guitar had glided slowly to the mat at the lowest step.

The shrill, long-drawn melodies of the tattoo had ceased. The last echo of the rolling drums had died away. The distant cheering no longer stirred the silence of the autumn night, and Ingraham, sad and dispirited, listening with only half hearted interest to the conversation, was suddenly aware of a light footfall behind him. Mrs. Langdon had risen and joined the major and her younger daughter at the vine-framed steps. A lamp was burning

low in the big, old-fashioned reception room or parlor, the dim light shining at the curtained windows, but the broad, Southern hallway was dark, and Ingraham, turning his head and peering into its depths could see nobody, yet footsteps, light, cautious, perhaps even stealthy, he had heard beyond possibility of doubt, and Blondo had shown sudden, uncontrollable excitement but a few moments before, and now had disappeared. Then in the voices of both Mrs. Langdon and Alice he had marked a certain falter, tremor, *something* that told of alarm, or at very least, of discomposure. And now Miss Langdon was missing. Then there was that story of Winn's about the big barn door swinging open, and—what was that other story Rex had heard, passing from lip to lip, as it were, while he was convalescing in hospital—something the President had said about Winn and Miss Alice the day of his visit?—something about Winn's being in worse danger now than he ever was before because Miss Alice had a jealous lover in the Southern army who was barely a dozen miles away? Rex had treated it as camp gossip. He recalled Winn's asking him a few days since whether he had ever seen Mr. Frenier since that night at Willard's. He had answered no, but he thought he had seen Blunt, and then Winn had told him later of Frenier's being an old friend of the Langdons' household, and that he believed he had seen both Blunt and Frenier at the east side of the stone bridge in the midst of the hurly burly and retreat after the battle. He had told him more, that he believed Blunt and Frenier both remained there—who on our side was there to pre-

vent?—and had purposely joined the triumphant Southerners. Now, could it be, thought Rex, that Frenier was the Southern lover the President had referred to—and that Winn was in danger because of his undisguised admiration, adoration, one might say, of Alice Langdon—because of this and Frenier? And all this time, these three or four lazy, languid, selfish days he had been absorbed in his own chagrin and forgetful of his faithful comrade, of Alice, of anybody but himself and Editha who had spurned him. It was indeed time to shake himself free from such entanglement—time to show his gratitude to his big-hearted, loyal friend, time——

And then Agatha Langdon's gentle, modulated voice was heard again in front, as she rejoined the trio at the steps, returning from the direction in which she had disappeared.

"Where do you suppose Blondo was?" said she. "In the cellar under the diningroom. He must have gone down the outward steps, and the lower door swung to behind him. ("Ah! Orpheus again, Miss Alice!" interposed Winn.) "I heard him scratching and whining trying to get out, and went down and released him."

"That's where he was scouting then, while I went back toward the barn and Prince's quarters," said Winn. "Now, it is after taps and time for me to get this interesting invalid back to bed or the doctor will stop our leave another time. Are you ready, Rex?"

Rex had been ready a few moments before. Now he was not so sure. Blondo had returned with Miss Agatha,

frisking bulkily but gratefully about her until satisfied that he had expressed all proper thanks, and then instead of sprawling in his old place, had gone straightway to the big, broad hall; had paused one moment, with ears attent and tail erect; then stepped cautiously, curiously in. Rex felt an odd but imperative desire not to leave just yet, and temporized. He would so like, he said, to hear one song again, even though its title was a broad hint to be off. Would Miss Alice please sing "Buenas Noches?" It was the first time he had ever asked her, or had shown especial interest in her music. Agatha looked in surprise and mute reproof at her sister as the latter falteringly took the guitar from the hands of Major Winn and, with unmistakable tremor in her voice, began.

Then all eyes turned toward the gateway where stood the waiting ambulance, for some one was coming swiftly up the gravel walk, and an orderly was leading two horses into the open moonlight, on the farther side of the lane. It was an officer, a stranger to the household, but not to Winn—an aide-de-camp of the brigade commander, a classmate of Rex at Columbia, he who had so recently been active in Ingraham's affairs. The song stopped suddenly at the clink of the spurs. Rex hoisted himself slowly from his reclining chair. Winn stepped quickly forward.

"What is it, Carden?" asked he, knowing full well this could be no social call.

"Read that," muttered the aide, as he passed a folded letter into the major's hand, never even glancing at him, as he lifted his jaunty forage-cap and bowed gravely, apol-

ogetically to the ladies. Winn recovered himself instantly.

"Let me present Mr. Carden," he said, turning quickly to Mrs. Langdon, tall and stately, with the *grande dame* air so well known to all Washington. "Mrs. Langdon, Mr. Carden. You have heard me speak of him many a time. Miss Langdon,—Miss Alice Langdon." And to each in turn the New York officer bowed and murmured, yet came no nearer to the steps. There was that in his bearing that spoke of serious business in hand—no time for social drifting—no leisure for delay. He had not even seen Ingraham, who now slowly came forward, holding forth a welcoming hand. The trooper jacket had been left at hospital. He was wearing at the moment a blouse of dark blue flannel, close buttoned to the throat, and not until he spoke did Carden seem to know that he was there. Then promptly, yet without effusiveness, in the same quiet manner that distinguished his set at home, the young staff officer greeted and shook hands with his college friend, expressing relief at seeing him so much better, and all the time every eye but his, perhaps, was narrowly watching Winn, who had stepped aside, and in a little patch of moonlight had opened and was reading the close written half page. But, before he could finish, other hoofbeats sounded in the lane; other riders dismounted; another form came dimly up the shaded walk, and the women knew it at a glance. What brought Dallas from his patients at so late an hour?

"Ah, you are here first," he said, at sight of Carden, then and kissed the white forehead of his sister, as she

hastened to meet him ; then took her hand and sought to lead her a little to one side, but she stood her ground.

“ What is it, brother ? ” she asked. “ I *know* there must be something.”

Then Winn looked up from the white paper, his face almost as white, his eyes instinctively seeking, first of all, those of Alice, whose own were fixed upon her mother. It was the doctor who was first to speak.

“ Important orders have come,” said he. “ A move had been decided on for to-night, and then—a messenger was intercepted. The whole plan seemed to be known among our friends across the river, and two of their brigades were in march to oppose us. Spies have been at work right here at Kalorama, and some are thought to be here now, for every path is picketed, every house and barn is being searched. I thought it best to come to you—lest you should feel alarm——”

“ Look ! ” interrupted the voice of Agatha, who had suddenly appeared. “ They’re coming now ! ”

“ *Who* are coming ? ” faintly gasped her sister, the guitar slipping from her trembling hands. The staff officer sprang to restore it, but every one else followed that pointing finger. Up the lane, dancing along the hedgerow in rythmical, rippling motion, a row of tiny, gleaming, blue white flashes came steadily onward toward the gate. Even to these eyes unused to war’s alarms no explanation was needed ;—even to these gentlewomen, whose lives had been ordered ever in peace, security and comfort. It was the reflection of the moonlight on brilliant, burnished,

threatening steel. Brookside, for the first time in its history, opened its portals at the summons of the bayonet. Another moment and an officer, backed by a dozen men in blue, came striding up the gravel path; then halted at sight of Union uniforms in the little group.

"I beg you to feel no uneasiness, Mrs. Langdon," said Carden. "I had hoped to explain before they reached the house. Every building about us for nearly a mile is being searched, and this gentleman, Captain Armstrong, is ordered—here. I hope it may not incommode you."

"It is necessary, Kate, dear," said the doctor, gravely, as he passed his arm about his sister's waist and sought to draw her to his side; but she stepped promptly, proudly forward.

"Most assuredly, captain," she answered, her voice clear, ringing, fearless. "Enter at once. Search wherever you will. This house shall never harbor spy nor traitor."

But before the officer could turn to his men there came an obstacle to their entrance. Without a word or cry or sound, Alice Langdon dropped suddenly upon the steps, her white face, senseless, pillowed on her outflung arms.

CHAPTER XI

THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

FOR a moment there was consternation. Major Winn, the one man present in whose eyes Alice Langdon held the center of the stage, quickly stooped and strove to lift her in his arms. Dr. Dallas and his sister, better schooled, bent and bade him lower the drooping head, and wonderingly he obeyed. Agatha had turned instantly to her stricken sister, and, even as she seized the limp and lifeless little hand, murmured words of reproof or warning fell from her lips. "Alice, how can you be so weak?—so nerveless?" Rex heard her whisper to ears that heard not, ere he went groping in search of the old-fashioned, silver pitcher that stood usually on the sideboard at the rear of the wide hallway, now dark as a well. Manlike he meant to be of use even in a case where man's mission is, as a rule, to blunder. Water was the first thing he thought of as appropriate to a swoon; but, quick as he was,—first man as he was—to start for the sideboard, somebody,—some other man,—was there before him. The two collided in the dark and grappled.

At least one of the two grappled. It was instinctive. It was the sudden impulse of the trained athlete. It was In-

graham's old impetuous self—the same self that spurred down the Jersey sentry not two months ago. It was the instinct of action, of fight, uppermost even when he was wrong in the first case as he was right in this. It was a grapple that was giant in its intent, but infant in execution. Never until that moment had he realized his utter weakness. He had no sooner grappled than he knew he had far more than met his match. What amazed him was that his antagonist, slim-waisted as a woman, seemed possessed of Herculean shoulders. Wiry, sinewy, slender, yet gifted with a supple strength that instantly overmatched him, the intruder wriggled from his clasp, and, without so much as a word or sound or blow, with merely a trip and a push sent Ingraham spinning backward, and landing doubled up and defeated on a broad, cane-bottomed settee.

And then when he thought to shout for help as quick as he could regain his breath, a cool, slim hand was on his mouth; another was thrusting something, no weapon at all, between the buttons of that flannel blouse. "Silence—and read," were the words almost hissed into his stunned and ringing ears; and then, light as a kitten, something went bounding up the broad stairs toward a patch of moonlight at the upper landing; a dark, slim shadow flitted across the silver sheen, and Rex was alone in his amaze and discomfiture. He strove to rise, but his breath was gone. He was inert and helpless, almost, as he had been upon his bed of fever. The next thing he realized some one was striking a light in the hall. Blondo was bristling and growling at the unaccustomed sight of bayonets at

the broad doorway. Winn and Dallas between them were supporting the drooping form of Alice Langdon to the very stairway up which but a few seconds before the lithe stranger had vanished. Agatha was silently following, and then, backing slowly toward him, facing the group on the veranda and holding aloft the freshly lighted candle, Mrs. Langdon was courteously ushering in a brace of officers, leading their double file of men. One of the two was his classmate Carden, looking embarrassed and distressed; the other was a lieutenant of regulars—of all men on earth, Fred Kent, that other classmate and erstwhile friend,—he of Runyon's staff but so short a while ago—he who had said, "I thought you had been—*sent*—back to New York." And now Kent must have been relieved from staff duty, his general having been mustered out, and, as a fledgling in the regulars, was here spy-searching, with the bayonets at his back. In college they had been on cordial terms, though never intimate. In camp, on the very first occasion of their meeting as officer and as trooper, Kent had treated him with coldness and aversion. In hospital, when he stood in sore need of friends and Winn had summoned Kent and Tracy, both had held aloof—both had denied him, and through Winn he had but recently learned that so far from shunning him because he had enlisted in the ranks, they held him, on some secret information they would not divulge, guilty of complicity in the robbery of the Raynor safe. This it was that accounted for Kent's extraordinary conduct that blazing morning in the Burnside camp. This charge it was, as poor Rex had so sadly

learned, he had now to face and put to flight as well as the charges of the field-officer-of-the-day.

And now here, within the hallway of the old Southern homestead, stood these two young soldiers, classmates of Columbia, brother officers of the Union Army, each clad in his trim-fitting uniform, each accurately sashed and belted, each standing cap in hand before the gray-haired mistress of the mansion, each in evident embarrassment and more or less distress of mind. The three as yet were near the entrance, between it and the broad and winding stairway to the upper floor. The one, the defeated grappler of the moment before, the pallid young soldier-patient so recently from hospital, lay back, panting still, in the gloom and darkness at the rear of the hall and in the refuge of that old settee. Carden was speaking and Ingraham was in no mood as yet to speak at all. His heart, even in its feeble throbbing, was hot against the other soldier, standing silent by Carden's side. He would listen and wait.

"It is painful duty, Mrs. Langdon," said the aide-de-camp, "but Dr. Dallas has explained the situation. Captain Armstrong has stationed sentries about the grounds. Mr. Kent is ordered to search within. May I ask if—might it not be better if—you had the servants come with lights? Then they can show us through the house and we need not trouble you at all."

"Our few servants have retired, Mr. Carden," was her answer, in the clear, vibrant tones Rex had loved to note,—tones that were tremulous despite the self control and courage of refined and resolute womanhood. "You shall

have candles and every assistance, if you will send the sergeant and some men to the diningroom."

Then turning she led the way, coming suddenly and most unexpectedly upon Ingraham, slowly rising from the settee, white and weak. At sight of him a start was irrepressible.

"Mr. Ingraham!" she cried, in alarm. "How ill you look! What can have happened?"

At sound of her anxious voice Carden came quickly forward, followed more slowly by Mr. Kent. All three were grouped again before the answer came, Carden listening in obvious sympathy, Kent with keen suspicion.

"Nothing serious, Mrs. Langdon, thank you. Hurrying for water in the dark, I stumbled into something and sprawled here over the furniture."

"You are white as a ghost. Let me prescribe for that at least," said the lady of the house, stepping to the massive sideboard and selecting a decanter and glass. "May I offer you a glass of wine at the same time?" she added, graciously, with a glance at her martial visitors. They bowed, and Carden accepted. Sherry might serve to smooth the asperities of the situation, and he was glad of any relief. Kent, however, was on stern duty bent. He begged to be excused and turned to his men, saying briefly: "The sergeant and two files—this way."

The soldiers came striding in, rifles in hand; yet something impelled the old-school sergeant in the lead to whip off his cap at sight of the gray-haired woman standing at the sideboard. Example is contagious and his fellows fol-

lowed suit. It was not strictly military and the sergeant knew it, but many an old-time rule was changed in the course of that strange year. The arms of the United States were now within the walls of Brookside in quest of lurking spy. "Your pardon, Mrs. Langdon; you said there were candles in the diningroom, I think," said Kent, and the lady led the way. It left Rex and Carden there alone.

"Did you fall?" asked the latter.

"I should have fallen but for *that* thing," was the answer, as Ingraham indicated the settee.

"You've dropped a letter," said the aide, and stooped to get it, for Rex was leaning on the sideboard,—leaning heavily. Yet their heads well nigh banged together, so sudden was Ingraham's swoop. He fairly snatched the fallen paper from beneath Carden's white gloved fingers, and once more stood erect, but swaying uncontrollably, and facing his astonished friend as Kent came forth, his candle held on high, while he halted one instant, gazing in wonderment and incertitude at the scene before him:—Carden, slightly flushed, staring fixedly at the pallid, slender young man in the plain blue blouse who, breathing hard and fast, with nervous hand was striving to thrust a letter of some kind into an inner pocket. One year later and Kent would have stayed that hand on the instant and demanded that paper, but we were new yet to the ways of war. He waited therefore—until too late.

But no man of the three forgot for a moment the incident, nor did Mrs. Langdon who surveyed it from the

archway to the diningroom. There was other witness still, had other been needed, for Winn was slowly coming down the stairs. But now all eyes and ears were intent on the main entrance, for spurred bootheels were tramping up the steps and a commanding voice was inquiring for the officer of the patrol. A burly soldier strode upon the scene in the person of the provost marshal. Captain Armstrong it was who entered without halt or ceremony, removing his cap at sight of Mrs. Langdon, but promptly addressing Lieutenant Kent:—

“Well, sir, what have you found?”

“Nothing as yet, captain,” was the troubled answer.

“We’ve only just got the candles——”

“Sergeant,” broke in the abrupt, stern voice, “take four men and search the cellar. Mr. Kent, you and your men follow me.” And with that, as though intolerant of delay or explanation, the elder officer started bulkily up the winding stairs. To Carden, to Mrs. Langdon, he had vouchsafed not a word, to Ingraham not so much as a glance. With Winn he exchanged a brief salute.

It is well to be prompt, sharp and decisive in matters military. It impresses most people and pleases superiors in rank. It does not always command, however, the best results. In the simple dress of Union blue there stood one man, known to the provost marshal’s people as Mrs. Langdon’s soldier-convalescent and Dallas’s pet patient, who might well have been worth investigation. The provost marshal was searching for a soldier spy in civilian dress, not, as he later disdainfully put it, “a civilian in soldier

clothes." He went his way, taking his patrol with him to explore the upper story, while the sergeant searched the cellar. Mrs. Langdon watched him until the last man disappeared upon the landing, then, after the fashion of a previous generation, turned quietly to the aide-de-camp.

"Your arm, Mr. Carden," said she, and taking it, swept with graceful dignity on the trail of the explorers. Winn turned again as though to follow her, and Rex Ingraham was for a moment left alone. He tottered weakly to the diningroom where stood a single candle, whipped the letter from his breast, held it to the light, and with wonderment in his blue eyes read the superscription following:

"FOR ALICE LANGDON.

"Do not open until you are alone."

Here was a predicament for a presumably loyal man. Some one—some strong though slender man—was at that moment secreted somewhere about the house. Some one had been lurking around the premises for hours during the evening, Blondo's excitement and uneasiness gave proof of that. Some one had penned the dog in the cellar, probably with the view of preventing further demonstration and possible betrayal. Some one, it would seem, had been there striving to see and speak with Alice Langdon, and, failing in this, had written a note intended for her alone; and that some one, finding it perilous to remain, had first entrusted the letter to him, Rex Ingraham, and then vanished by way of the upper story. The house and grounds were, he knew, surrounded. There was no chance of escape. Obviously then his dash for the second floor was in

hopes of finding some place of concealment, and here were the provost marshal and his men searching the house for spies known to be lurking about the neighborhood—spies the government would be glad to get because of the alarming betrayal of official plans and secrets—spies, as Dallas said, that had obtained knowledge of the intended movement of the brigade at Kalorama; for, even before it was to start, two brigades of Virginians had seized the very heights across the Potomac it had been directed to occupy, and now the government was aroused in earnest.

As a soldier it was Ingraham's duty to tell at once what he knew of the presence of the mysterious stranger. As a gentleman he was bound to give that letter to Alice Langdon. If he told of his adventure, could he be sure he would be permitted to deliver the letter? Would it not be seized as evidence? That the writer was in all probability Alice Langdon's Southern lover Rex felt sure the moment he read the superscription. That that lover was Edouard Frenier he had several reasons for believing and only one for doubting. Frenier, when he saw him at Willards', did not appear to be either muscular or athletic. Rex had forgotten that in his enfeebled state almost any healthful man, even lithe and slender as was Frenier, might well prove far too strong for him to successfully grapple. If it *was* Frenier, he knew the house and grounds; for, though not native here nor "to the manner born," Frenier had spent many a week as the guest of Brookside, even from early boyhood. In all probability then this was Frenier, and Frenier was now in hiding somewhere in the upper story

or the garret above. If so, the chances were ten to one the patrol would speedily find him, and Rex meanwhile might hold his peace.

Still half dazed and in dire perplexity he stood again leaning at the sideboard. The generous liquor, poured for him by Mrs. Langdon, was beginning to take effect. A temporary strength at least was come to him, and with it the conviction that he must speak. Not to Kent, the young commander; not to the stranger provost marshal, but to Winn, the stalwart, who could be relied upon to know a soldier's duty in the premises and to do it. He would even tell Winn of that letter—No! Would that be wise or fair, knowing now as he did that stout John Winn had utterly lost his honest heart to the fair girl for whom that letter was intended—that letter she was so urgently bidden not to open until she was alone? It was indeed a perplexing situation, yet one that would permit but little delay. Act he must and that within the hour.

Overhead could be heard the heavy footfalls as the soldiers passed from room to room. Once he heard Mrs. Langdon's soft voice inviting—yes, inviting—the searching party to return and enter some nook they had passed without discovery. Twice he heard the strident tones of the provost marshal, giving curt orders to the men. Then presently there came the swish of skirts upon the stairway. It was Agatha Langdon descending, a little glass in hand. Straight to the sideboard she came, and there started back at sight of Ingraham.

"Everything startles me to-night," she said, "yet, how ill *you* look, and as for Alice——"

"I hope Miss Alice is recovering," he ventured.

She gave him a strange, questioning look as she replied. "She is better, yes, but—so unstrung," and the white hand that poured the sherry trembled perceptibly. "It is for her," she continued, hurriedly. "Oh, they are so, so inconsiderate. At least that cavalry captain is. He insists on searching everywhere. We have even moved Alice now into mother's room, while they search hers, and you know it is impossible that any one should find refuge here—under our roof." Again that searching, questioning look. And still Rex could not speak. And still she hesitated. And then her mother's voice was heard at the head of the balustrade, calling her name, and hurriedly she turned and sped up-stairs, carrying the sherry with her. Then came the sergeant and his quartette, fresh from their unsuccessful scouting through the cellars. And all this time Blondo, previously caught and crammed into a hall closet to put him out of the way, was scratching and whining and demanding release. He had objected strenuously to the entrance of armed parties, and Mrs. Langdon herself had decreed his confinement. Now, incensed at such indignity, he had begun a violent barking that presently drowned other noises on the parlor floor. The sergeant shouted a question to the weary trooper, once more seated on the settee, his face buried in his hands. The sergeant wished to know if search had been made among the pantries and closets, and both he and his men looked with glis-

tening eyes at the array of decanters set forth, after the hospitable fashion of the day, upon the sideboard. The sergeant intimated a desire to continue the work. Ingraham suggested his going aloft and asking for instructions. Then a sudden thought occurred to him. Why not go himself? There might then be opportunity of seeing Alice Langdon. Even if the sideboard suffered in his brief absence, what mattered that in view of affairs so much more momentous? Clinging to the balusters, he slowly climbed to the second floor and found Winn standing like a sentry in front of the first door.

It was Mrs. Langdon's room and thither they had half led, half borne the younger daughter, and now, with Mrs. Langdon herself to guide them, the searchers had not only entered the room to which Alice had been first conducted, but at the captain's order three of the men, through a dormer window, had clambered forth upon the roof, and the shingles were snapping and creaking under their heavy tread. They were heard passing southward along the front of the house; then moving west at the corner; whereupon the captain thrust forth his head and shouted, "Look well about the chimneys, and prod every dark place with your bayonets." Then, a moment later, they heard his voice in lower tone: "Mr. Kent, you'll have to get out there, too," said he, "I'm too heavy."

And at this the two friends, standing there silent beside the half open doorway, heard the sudden swish of skirts again, and Agatha Langdon threw open the portal and came forth. "How criminally absurd this is!" she cried.

"It is simply driving Alice wild with nervousness. It's as much as we can do to restrain her. There can't be anyone on the roof!"

Not on the roof perhaps. Possibly on the gallery at the westward side; possibly in the little tower, but certainly somewhere, for all on a sudden came the cry from above—"Halt! Halt!" Then a scurry of feet. Then another "Halt!" in still a different tone. Then sounds of rush and scuffle, and then a startling cry: "Head him off!" "Don't let him jump!" Then shouts of dismay, a crash of lattice work, a splintering of glass, a scream of despair from the lips of Alice Langdon. Then Winn sprang to the steps and led, as officers and men came rushing from the rooms and bounding down the stairway crying "He's thrown himself down through the arbor!" and then further shoutings and scurryings from without, a mustering under the westward windows, an excited search, then ominous lowering of voices, then hurried summons for Dr. Dallas; and—Rex Ingraham never could tell just how it happened, but a frantic, wild-eyed girl came staggering from the doorway into his arms, and weak as he was he seized and held and restrained her, then led her gently to a sofa in the corridor and leaned over her, as sobbing, shivering and trembling with excitement and terror she clung to him. And then as heavy footfalls in measured tread, and stifled voices were heard from the lower hall, telling of some heavy burden being borne within, even Mrs. Langdon could stand the suspense no longer and hastened down the stairs. Agatha had already gone. Rex Ingra-

ham was for the instant alone with Alice. It was now or never. "Take and hide this letter," he murmured, low, hurried, yet forceful. "Let no one see it until you can read it alone. They're coming again. Now I must go!"

With ashen face Agatha came speeding up the stairs, as Ingraham straightened up to meet her. But one more glance he gave the girl beside him, and in that glance he saw her face and in that face there was a look he carries to this day—a look of piteous, almost agonized appeal, as though meekly imploring him to stay. And in her eyes there gleamed a new light—something strange indeed at such a time, in such surroundings—a light of new, sudden, unlooked-for hope, almost of joy. And yet, unless every possible indication was wrong, here beneath her mother's roof, at this very moment, they were bearing the senseless, probably mangled, form of her daring lover—the Southern soldier lover on whose account she had shown but a moment before such utter terror and dismay.

"Have they—caught him? Is he badly hurt?" Rex found time to ask as he brushed by Agatha, who only meekly bowed her head, then with extended arms threw herself upon her knees before her sister, then drew that sister to her fluttering heart. Rex heard them sobbing as he weakly went below.

About the same settee a little group had formed, while wondering soldiers stood, muttering or in silence, looking curiously on. Mrs. Langdon and Dr. Dallas were ministering to a semi-conscious and much injured man. Armstrong, the captain, stood grimly by, scribbling a despatch

on the back of his flat notebook. Carden stood ready to take it, pale and silent. Kent had disappeared. Suddenly the provost marshal looked up:—"Is it possible yet to examine his pockets, Dallas? I ought to have his name, of course."

"A moment," answered the surgeon, briefly. His first duty was to restore, to save, if possible. He could not tolerate what he called "these Mexican war mannerisms" of the cavalry officer. He was sponging the blood from a ghastly face and examining a deep cut.

"At least I presume I am safe in saying we have caught Frenier—the spy—just where we expected, and that his injuries are mainly superficial?" hazarded Armstrong, bluntly. He was a soldier tried, and war with him was—war.

"You have caught a spy, possibly," answered Dallas, coldly, "and where you expected, probably. But I can say nothing professionally of Mr. Frenier's injuries. I did not know he *had* any."

Armstrong whirled on him in mingled amaze and irritation. "You don't mean to tell me this isn't Frenier!" he exclaimed.

"I don't mean to tell you anything until this man revives. Mrs. Langdon has already told you it was not Mr. Frenier."

"Mrs. Langdon may have had reasons for wishing to conceal the fact," said Armstrong, with hapless sincerity.

The color rushed to the lady's face. Dallas himself half started to his feet, wrathful and bent on reprisals. But a

new voice was added to the animated colloquy. Edging toward the settee, Rex Ingraham had taken one long look at the prostrate man, and the light of new discovery was gleaming in the blue eyes, as he turned upon the provost marshal.

"Mrs. Langdon's statement is exactly true, sir. This is not Edouard Frenier at all."

"What do *you* know about it, my man?" was the instant question. Armstrong had already felt his rudeness and was glad of another turn in the tide of affairs.

"I know Mr. Frenier and I know your prisoner, too. They are totally different men," said Ingraham, quietly.

"Who is it, then?" snapped the captain.

A feeble voice from the settee was heard, breaking the silence that followed close upon the question.

"My name is not Frenier. It is Lane," were the barely audible words.

"What say you, Ingraham? Is that so?" demanded Armstrong.

"It may be," answered Rex, "but in June, and New York, he was known as Major Chalmers."

CHAPTER XII

A DOUBLE MYSTERY

DALLAS had another prisoner-patient to care for that night. The announcement that the injured man was Major Chalmers, not Lane as he declared, or Frenier as the provost marshal supposed, created marked sensation. Armstrong dropped his pencil and stood glaring at Ingraham, unbelieving. Mrs. Langdon, pressing her hands to her temples as though bewildered, even shocked, was aided to her feet and led to a chair, Dallas and Winn supporting her. That she should know and that Dallas should know it was not Frenier who lay there, gashed and bleeding from his fall, Ingraham, of course, expected. Brother and sister both had known the Freniers for years. That neither of them, however, should know that it was Major Chalmers to whom they were ministering, and that each should show strange and deep emotion at the mention of his name, was something Ingraham could not understand at all. For several minutes the gentle mistress of Brookside sat dazed and silent. Dallas whispered a word or two in her ear, then returned to the sufferer on the settee, who, failing in his feeble attempt to conceal his identity, seemed to have gone off into another

swoon, and now the surgeon's ministrations appeared to lack the element of personal interest or sympathy. He had lapsed into the professional if not, indeed, the perfunctory. Some one had brought lint and bandages from the waiting ambulance, and kneeling by the couch a soldier attendant was working under the direction of the surgeon. Armstrong, meantime, in low voice, but sternly and severely, was catechising Rex.

The tone and manner of the blunt soldier irritated the young collegian. It might be all professional, as he tried to assure himself, but it had about it very much of superiority and a distinct something of suspicion. Armstrong wished to be told succinctly all about this so-called Major Chalmers. Why "major?" Whence came he? When, how and where had Ingraham known him? Why should he seek to deny his name, etc., etc.,—nine questions out of ten being beyond Ingraham's power to answer. He did not even know Chalmers, he protested. He only knew that among gentlemen at the New York Hotel he was hailed by that name and title, and apparently by no other. He was a business or professional associate of Mr. John Raynor, and only once in his life before had Ingraham seen him—that memorable evening in June. At last, therefore, finding it impossible to extract further information, Armstrong abruptly closed his notebook and the investigation, curtly told Ingraham it was high time for him to return to hospital and that he marveled much that a man under such charges as his should not be under guard. Rex flushed with indignation, but prudently held his

tongue ; saluted, faced about and started to go. Then Mrs. Langdon, rising, held forth a sympathetic hand.

"Come to us again whenever you can, Mr. Ingraham," said she. "And now I must try to help this poor—gentleman"—she balked a bit at the word, but went again unflinchingly to the task.

"I shall ride up to headquarters and report this in person, Dallas," said the captain. "Come on, Carden, we will need you ; but, Mr. Kent, you and your guard will remain," he continued, as that young officer slowly re-entered the hall. "Take charge of the prisoner and, as soon as Dr. Dallas permits, convey him either to headquarters or hospital, if need be, but see to it that he does not escape. Can he not be lifted or turned now, Dallas? We *must* search him, you know."

"Not yet," was the short answer. "He is in no shape to be searched. I'll be responsible for his belongings and shall move him to hospital in half an hour. You can examine him there, if need be."

"*Must* you—is it wise to,—move him to-night?" Rex heard the low murmured question from Mrs. Langdon's pallid lips.

"Wiser at least than to keep him here," was the significant reply. "Go, dear, and—Does Agatha know?"

Mrs. Langdon glanced hurriedly about her. The sufferer lay moaning slightly, still apparently unconscious. The kneeling attendant was absorbed in his work with the bandages. Dallas had drawn his sister a little to one side and only Rex stood near. Sentries had been posted, stage

fashion, by Kent, at the doorways. Armstrong and Carden, listening to Winn, were walking slowly toward the entrance. Except Ingraham, therefore, there was no one to hear the murmured answer.

"She did not see his face at all. She still believes it is Edouard."

"Then as long as possible," said Dallas, "let her think so. I'll get him out of the way."

And so, a little later, they were trundled through the dewy, moonlit lanes,—Chalmers only barely conscious and saying little,—Ingraham, keenly alert, but saying nothing at all. He was pondering over this new and sudden turn of affairs, wondering in what way this strange reappearance of Chalmers might influence his clouded fortunes, and watching eagerly every symptom that spoke of returning strength and consciousness, and for opportunity to question on his own account.

But for the time at least this was not to be. Chalmers was painfully, if not severely, injured. He had sought, it would seem, to escape by leaping from the eaves to the roof of the northward wing, and thence to a little summer house or arbor, but the flimsy lattice work of the latter had crashed under his weight and sent him whirling down upon the hotbed at its side. He was sorely cut by splintered glass, and bruised and shaken, as well as weak from loss of blood. His foot had caught in some vine. He had plunged head foremost from the arbor and played havoc with the hotbed and his own physiognomy. No wonder Agatha knew not who it was they were bearing in, his face

hidden by a silken kerchief. Reason she had in abundance for believing the form to be that of Edouard Frenier, her sister's Creole lover.

Arrived at the hospital Dallas caused his new patient to be carried into the ward, and Ingraham followed. The guard waited without. The sufferer moaned audibly as they were lifting him from the ambulance and carrying him through, so that homesick, fevered men lifted up their heads or languidly turned on their hot pillows to gaze at the intruder. Seeing this, Dallas led the way to a much smaller room and thither they bore Chalmers, and there a few moments later his outer garments were removed in presence of Armstrong himself, who had hurriedly returned, and thoroughly searched for possibly incriminating papers. Money there was in abundance:—gold in a knitted silken purse; New York bank bills—Park and Chemical—in a flat note case—over three hundred dollars in all. Next came a small bundle of letters, tightly bound with ribbon, at sight of which Dallas stretched forth his hand and said: “Don’t open those here, Armstrong,”—whereat the captain stared,—then wrapped them with two other personal missives addressed to Major Hugh Chalmers, New York Hotel, in a piece of cartridge paper; called for a candle and sealed them on the spot. There was a thin cardcase, with perhaps six or eight of the major’s own cards and as many of those of other Southern gentlemen recently in the North, but not one of Edouard Frenier’s. There were two little Derringer pistols and a clasp knife, a fine gold watch and chain, some small silver in the pock-

ets of the silken waistcoat, some receipted hotel bills,—Philadelphia and Baltimore,—and that was practically all. Nothing that remotely suggested maps or sketches or notes of military preparation. Nothing that in the least suggested the possibility of a spy. Armstrong was visibly disappointed, indeed disconcerted. “What on earth did he hide for?” “Why did he attempt to escape?” “What was he afraid of if he *isn't* a spy?” were the questions he drove at Dallas, since the patient himself seemed incapable of reply. Then Winn appeared, anxious about Ingraham, and insisting that he get to bed, and for the first time, Dallas, who had become grave and preoccupied, looked carefully into Rex’s pallid face, and seconded the major’s motion. “Go to bed at once,” said he, “or you’ll be on my hands another fortnight.”

“I need to see that man the moment he can see anybody,” protested Ingraham, to the surprise of both Dallas and Armstrong. “Major Winn can tell you how important it is, gentlemen, and I beg that I be permitted to talk with him the moment he is able to talk at all.”

Winn nodded confirmation of the words. Armstrong glared again, but said nothing. This was added complication, and already his faculties were overtasked. Dallas, after a moment’s survey of the bandaged patient, looked up and said, “To-morrow, perhaps; to-night, no.” And Winn led Rex away.

It was then near midnight. The soft September moon was silvering the wooded heights without. The halls within seemed close, hot, stuffy to an unbearable degree.

Excited and nervous, Ingraham was in no mood for sleep. He needed to think, he said, and then to act. He went obediently to his bed in the little spare room at the northward end of the ground floor, and a passing steward came in and helped him off with his coat and trousers, and bathed his heated forehead. Then Winn left him, with promise to come early in the morning and with injunction to try to banish thought and go to dreamland. Two convalescents were dozing peacefully in the little room, so that Ingraham found himself practically alone. He drew a deep reclining chair to the window and, seated there, gazed out to the west toward the middle distance where an old-fashioned but most comfortable mansion nestled in the foliage less than a mile away. He could see in the clear moonlight the very tower in which Chalmers had presumably taken refuge before his mad attempt at escape. When first discovered, so the soldiers said, the lithe Southerner was flattened like a squirrel between the green blind and the boarding on the dark side toward the wing. They had not even had time to prod with their bayonets, as Armstrong had ordered. They were striving to enter the tower through the opposite window, when with a spring the hunted quarry broke cover and darted to the nearest chimney, placing that between him and his startled pursuers before he essayed the leap to the shingled roof below. They were talking of it out there on the broad piazza even now,—some two or three of the guard. Rex could hear the murmurous voices and catch an occasional word. One of the men, a young Irishman, was giving his views on

captains in general and Captain Armstrong in particular. He had cut his hand deeply, it seems, exploring in the ruins of the hotbed at Armstrong's orders, searching for papers, letters, anything legible that might have been dropped by the prisoner in his crashing fall. He said the glass cut deep almost as the captain's tongue. He was but a recruit and unused to the gruff, dictatorial ways of the old service, and, there being at the moment no sergeant to check, this novice in arms was volubly muttering his discontent.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," say the scriptures, and, all unlooked-for, from the words of Private Sullivan in outer darkness came a volume of light.

"He seen me hand all blood by the light of his d—d lantern, an' sez he 'Tie it up in yer handkerchief or ye'll bleed to death.' Hwat would *I* be doin' wid a handkerchief, says I, thinkin' to get his. 'Thin go to the docther,' sez he, an' runs away afther the corpse they was carryin' into the house, an' wid that the windy blind came bang agin the back av me head. 'Take that,' says the windy, an' when I reached fer to hit back it was tight shut agin, an' a white thing was lyin' on the ground—it's red enough now, bedad,—and 'twas the windy said 'take that,' an' 'twas the hanky it meant an' not the whack——"

A step was heard in the little room. Rex turned impatiently. There stood Dallas.

"I've come to give you something to make you sleep," said he.

"I don't want it," said Rex. "Come here and listen to this."

It was official eavesdropping, perhaps, and Dallas looked for a moment puzzled and perturbed, then vehemently interested. Then up he sprang and stepped forth through the long Venetian window opening on the northward piazza. Rex, in hospital slippers and loose woolen gown, went only as far as the threshold. In a moment Dallas was back, bringing with him, wondering and abashed, the young Irish regular, his right hand bound in a handkerchief, now brown red with blood. A corporal stood back of him, waiting.

"You say there was some one opened the blind of that window in the wing just beside the arbor?" questioned Dallas, eagerly. "Are you sure? And—is this the handkerchief?"

"I'm not," answered Sullivan. "It's the bang on the back of me head'll swear to it."

"Who else saw it—heard it?" demanded Dallas. "Corporal," raising his voice, "tell the steward to come here with a basin and bandages." Was it possible that the hand of the practised surgeon was trembling a bit as he tugged at the hard knots in the soaked and stiffened cambric.

"No one, sorr, just then. They was all busy with him they was liftin' into the house."

"Will you cut it?" asked Rex, holding forth a pen knife. "You can hardly untie those knots now."

Dallas looked up queerly, just a second, but Rex withdrew the question and the knife. The steward came with

warm water and a basin. Once thoroughly wet the knots yielded readily. Presently Dallas unrolled the flimsy, soggy fabric, wrung it out and stowed it in a pocket, glanced but a moment at the recent gash on the soldier's hand—"Dress that and bandage it carefully," he said, to the steward; then, signalling to Ingraham, turned away to where a candle stood on a little table at the westward window. Here he bent over and closely examined the handkerchief. A knife might have cut out the very fragment he wished to retain. It was of delicate, costly cambric,—hemstitched after the fashion of the day—too large for a woman's; too fragile, almost, for a man's, but Dallas was searching for sign of ownership—initial, monogram, *something*, and searched in vain.

"You were there while they were searching. Didn't they go through the ground floor, too?" asked Dallas of his trooper patient.

"Only partially. The sergeant had been through the cellar and kitchen, I think, and was waiting instructions when the cries came from the roof. I don't know what they searched after that. I don't know that they searched at all. The captain was satisfied he had his man until—until I put my foot in it," and Ingraham's tired eyes sought the grave face of the army surgeon. Had he done right or wrong? Had he brought these kind and hospitable friends to sore embarrassment,—perhaps to actual trouble? To him at least the arrest of Chalmers was a matter of the utmost importance, linked as was Chalmers with the chain of circumstances by which he stood environed. But

now he had seen enough to assure him that in some mysterious way the arrest of Chalmers was a matter of vital interest to the household at Brookside, albeit in a totally different way. He could not be mistaken in the symptoms he had seen, in the words that had been let fall. Chalmers was a man whose unlooked for appearance on the scene had revived associations of a painful and distressing nature. Even now, as Dallas stood there plunged in thought, it was plain that he was in sore perplexity, indeed in deep concern. Suddenly he turned to the little group across the room. The steward had about completed his task and the freshly bandaged hand went up to the peak of the forage cap, as the surgeon spoke.

"Sullivan, I think your name is. Ah, that will do, steward, thank you. I'll look after this man. Be good enough to close that door, corporal." And having thus eliminated other listeners than Ingraham, and satisfied himself that the two convalescents were sound asleep, Dallas turned on the young recruit.

"Have you told anybody about this—handkerchief matter?" he asked.

"No one, sorr, but some of the fellers wid me here—the guard."

"You did not mention it to—Lieutenant Kent?"

"Sure he never axed me, sorr."

Dallas stood looking the young fellow squarely in the face. He hesitated a moment before putting the next question.

"You said something about hearing a voice—Was it a man's—or a woman's?"

"There was only two wurruds, sorr, just 'take that,' an' I thought it meant that belt it gave me in the head."

Dallas grew impatient. "It wasn't the hit but the handkerchief that was meant. Was it a man?"

"'Twas only a whisper, sorr. How could I say? Wid the hinge squeakin', too."

"Then *don't* say. Do you understand, Sullivan? I wish you to say nothing more about this until I see you in the morning." Sullivan answered with dumb salute. "That will do then," said Dallas, and the soldier turned and left.

Then the two men faced each other: the army surgeon, schooled for years in the tenets of the service; the college bred youth with barely a month of actual service behind him.

"I have kept you here listening to this," said Dallas, "because I think you know quite as much as I do and possibly much more. You have your reasons for wishing to see this man in here and I do not have to be told what they are. We had our reasons for wishing—never to see him, and they are reasons I cannot give you. Mr. Ingraham, behind what you have seen and heard to-night is something that deeply concerns the honor and good name of my sister's household. Are you, or are you *not*, in position to befriend her?"

No answer came for many seconds. Ingraham stood in deep and painful thought. Then he spoke:—

"Dr. Dallas, you are soldier as well as surgeon, and

you know a soldier's duty. I report to you that I have this night failed in mine. I should have reported this to Major Winn, or to that provost marshal, but—a woman's name was what stopped me."

"Go on," said Dallas, hoarsely, as Ingraham faltered. "You knew this man was hidden somewhere about the house and you concealed it. What then?"

"This man, as I now believe, entrusted me with a letter for your niece—and I gave it."

"To Agatha?" demanded Dallas, his face gray as the dingy, white washed walls. "My God!"

"To Agatha?" echoed Ingraham. "No, to Alice! and it bade her read only when she was alone."

For one moment the doctor stood there mystified, yet with strange relief speaking in his fine, expressive face. Then on a sudden he stepped to the window. The moon, though westering now, was still high in the heavens. The light was fine and soft, yet clear. A corporal of the guard, seated on the steps, sprang up at sight of the glistening shoulder-straps. "I want an ambulance at once," said the doctor. "Warn me when it comes."

Ten minutes later Dallas had driven away, leaving Rex Ingraham sitting at that westward window, forgetful for the first time of the girl who, reckless of his love, his ills and wrongs, had gone sailing forth to sea; thoughtful for the first time of the girl who, wild eyed and sobbing, had clung to him in her terror. What new trouble had that secret missive brought into *her* life?—What new complication into his own?

CHAPTER XIII

DISGUISE

THE dawn was breaking when Dallas returned. Ingraham, after one or two cat naps in his reclining chair, had meantime stolen across the ward to the little room where Chalmers lay, inert, helpless, doubly a prisoner, just beginning to regain consciousness. The attendant whispered to his late visitor that once or twice the Southerner had opened his eyes and looked questioningly about him. "Was it you that wanted to talk with him?" asked the man. He knew of Ingraham,—knew that although borne on the rolls as a trooper of the regular cavalry, he was by birth and education the peer of any one of his officers, and it therefore pleased him to address this temporary patient with the easy familiarity warranted by Ingraham's voluntary assumption of his humble station. His curiosity, too, was piqued. He knew that in some inexplicable way the official head of the big hospital, Dr. Dallas, had found himself entangled in the affairs both of this reputed spy, Chalmers, and this soldier "swell," Ingraham, who had been brought over from Brookside, home of the Langdons, in the doctor's own ambulance. Half a dozen men had heard Ingraham's impetuous dec-

laration that he must see and talk with the stranger patient the moment that patient could be permitted to talk at all; and, honest Yankee that he was, the attendant would have risked official censure to promote just such a talk could he but be sure he would be permitted to hear every word of it.

Four o'clock came, however, and the relief was again changed on the hospital veranda, without either Dallas's return to his duties or Chalmers's to full consciousness, and Ingraham, wearied and worn, had thrown himself upon his narrow cot, after obtaining the attendant's promise to call him should Chalmers seem to rouse. Sound sleep was even then impossible. He was dimly conscious of a murmured conversation going on just outside his window. The corporal and some of the guard were talking over the exciting events of the earlier hours of the night, and of a strange sequel. Rex popped up his head to listen.

"The hull brigade, I tell you," the corporal was saying, "every mother's son of 'em—left their tents standin' and marched away in the moonlight. Nothin' but a guard left along the hull plateau. And you never heard a sound of it."

The brigade, the big brigade, gone! Marched away in the moonlight, and this, too, in spite of the story that alert friends of the Southern army had learned that a move was to be made and that counter move had been ordered accordingly! Earlier in the night, from the lips of the Irish soldier, had Rex received most significant and surprising intelligence,—a circumstantial statement that so startled Dr. Dallas as to send him night riding again to

Brookside, investigating on his own account; and now, once more, not from officers in position to explain and understand but from men in the ranks, there had come to him information of great importance. If the brigade had gone Carden, the aide-de-camp, must have gone too, and at this moment Ingraham needed Carden almost as much as he needed to confer with Chalmers. How strangely fate had again thrown together these men who, but a few weeks earlier, were within touch and hail of each other and within half a mile radius of the New York Hotel! Armstrong, the stern, uncompromising provost marshal—Rex well remembered the keen interest that officer inspired among the student body in May and June, a regular, the first of the kind they had seen; he remembered, too, Armstrong's obvious admiration for Editha Raynor,—remembered that it was Armstrong who called to say good-bye at the very moment they were searching the safe for the Frenier package,—remembered the little pang of jealousy he felt, for he liked not Armstrong to whom, with other young Columbiads, he had been presented the day of the flag raising after Sumter, and by whom he was not remembered the next time they happened to meet. Then there were Kent and Carden, fellow students with whom he had frequently foregathered, now enthusiastic young officers, one of the two almost an active enemy, the other a sympathetic friend. Then there was Winn, stanch ally and counsellor, and finally here lay Chalmers, the lithe, keen-eyed Southerner whom he had seen in conference with John Raynor, whose virile strength he had first felt the evening

of that assault on Waverly Place when, with one arm, Chalmers had lifted him to a sofa as easily as he would have carried a child. No wonder the grapple at Brookside, earlier this eventful night, should have proved how powerless he was in the hands of that unconscious athlete. The athlete, poor fellow, lay limp and nerveless now, swathed in bandages and surrounded by bayonets, a spy, if Armstrong was to be believed, and an object of strange, mysterious interest to Dallas. Rex was wide awake, cudgelling his brain for explanation of it all, when the pallid gray light of early dawn set the birds to chirruping in the surrounding trees, and with it came the crack of whip, the crunch of hoof and crash of wheels in the fresh gravel of the roadway without, and then the voice of Dallas answering the low-toned challenge of the sentry at the gate. Ingraham was up and on his feet in an instant.

But this time the surgeon-in-charge passed by without so much as a glance. Rex heard his swift footstep as he passed round the north end of the broad wooden veranda, heard the shuffle of feet as certain members of the guard arose to salute him, and finally the creak of the boarding as he sprang up the steps and entered the northward hall. He was going at once to Chalmers's room and for the third time that night Ingraham left his bed and stood beside that of the battered prisoner. Dallas was already there, bending over him, so intent upon his scrutiny that he never heard Ingraham's entrance, nor was he aware of it until, straightening up, he caught sudden sight of his pallid visitor.

"You should be in bed," said he, briefly. "You will never recover at this rate."

"What's the use when I can't sleep?" was the impatient answer. "Can you tell me any news of—Brookside?"

"Calming down a little, but——" and Dallas ominously shook his head. "It's a wonder they are not down, all of them, after all this excitement. Alice is a bunch of nerves. Agatha is absolutely nonchalant. I never saw such a woman."

"Does she know—about Chalmers?"

"She does not, because I gave her no chance to ask questions. She would have it all out of me if she could have me alone three minutes. Ingraham," he whispered, hoarsely, "I have got to do a thing I hate to do, and I want you to be my witness. I—*must*—search this man further. It seems a low down thing when he lies here—helpless."

"Then why do it?" demanded Ingraham, his eyes clouding. "Your provost marshal friend couldn't find a scrap about him to warrant his being held as a spy——"

"Wait," interposed Dallas, with uplifted hand. He carefully closed the door leading to the main ward, bent and studied again the bandaged face of his drowsing patient, then turned once more to Ingraham, sinking his voice to a whisper. "He had abundant time to conceal such things somewhere about the house before he was cornered. Armstrong has been there searching high and low. He has found something, I don't know what, and taken it to McClellan's headquarters. But among this man's belongings there was something else—something

my sister tells me of—that would not be in his pockets, and that Armstrong may have overlooked. Is it enough that I say to you it deeply concerns the honor of my sister's household, and that on *her* account I must satisfy myself?"

A moment's pause. Then Ingraham bowed his head. "Go on," said he.

Dallas turned to the cot. "Bring that lamp," he muttered to the silent, sleepy attendant and, as the man obeyed, Dallas gently raised the sinewy arm that lay outside the sheet, and pulled that sheet downward just enough to uncover the broad, deep chest. A vest, or undershirt, of Lisle thread was buttoned snugly as high as the muscular throat, and one glance was sufficient to show that, directly over the heart, was an inside pocket formed either by a double thickness of material or else by stitching in a patch of silk or linen. Quickly, deftly, the doctor's fingers unbuttoned the flap, turned it back, partially revealing a skin of almost marble whiteness, shaded by the thick, mossy growth of hair. The mouth of the little pocket gaped open, revealing some flat object, closely wrapped in oiled silk, and this the doctor relentlessly drew forth, even though the lips of the unconscious sleeper seemed babbling feeble protest, and then, unfolding the silk, there was disclosed a little *carte de visite* photograph and some flimsy pages close covered with writing. Dallas turned the former to the light. A look of astonishment, of incredulity, finally of relief, shone on his haggard face. "Look!" he stammered, holding the picture so that Rex could plainly

see. It was the face of a fair young girl,—a stranger. “Look! It isn’t—*hers* at all! Nor is that her writing!” Then hurriedly, yet most carefully, and as though both abashed and ashamed, Dallas rewrapped the picture and letters, restored the packet to its place, carefully refastened the shirt and drew the white sheet well up over the powerful chest, and fairly sighed as he turned to Ingraham. “It is not what we thought at all,” said he, motioning the attendant to fall back. “I should tell you, I suppose, that not a week ago this man carried there, or said he did, a picture and certain writings that it was most essential he—should *not* have.”

“Possibly I can tell you where to——” began Ingraham, after a moment’s thought, but a heavy step was at the doorway. Dallas signalled “hush,” and, with gloom in his eyes, Captain Armstrong came striding into the room. Behind him, halting, however, at the portal and looking dazed and worried, tiptoed Lieutenant Kent. Dallas turned on both in surprise. The provost marshal lost no time in ceremony. The gray light of the morning was streaming in at the eastward window and his usually rubicund face seemed to take its hue from its pallid surroundings. Hardly tempering his voice, he abruptly demanded:—

“Did you see anything of a pass—a regular, cover-every thing pass—for that man?”

Dallas shook his head and waited for explanation.

“Well, by God, he had one,—McClellan’s own,—and I’ve been getting my fingers burned in the first place and

rapped in the second. What the devil possessed him to hide,—then run,—do everything conceivable to make himself seem like a spy?”

“You mean that he had—General *McClellan's* pass to go everywhere around our camps?”

“Anywhere he damned pleased,” growled Armstrong, red with wrath. “Damn him! I believe he is laughing at me now.”

It did look like it. Under the maze of bandages the moustached face seemed to be twitching with strange emotion, possibly merriment, though the situation was anything but a joke.

“Well—what now?” ventured Dallas.

“Now,” began Armstrong, wrathfully. “Nothing—*just* now—because you say it won't do to move him; but, just so soon as he can be trundled, I am ordered to see that he is moved to a private residence in town, not three blocks from the War Department.”

“Before that is done,” said Dallas, gravely, “I shall beg a word with General *McClellan* myself. Men provided with his pass or safeguard should have no need to strive to assume a name other than their own, and that's the least this prisoner has done. I object to his being taken until I have a chance to speak with the Chief.”

“Now here's another,” growled Armstrong, turning suddenly on Ingraham, standing silently at the bedside. “I'm virtually accused of harboring him here when he should now be on his way to his regiment. How soon can you start him?”

"To-day, if you please," stoutly spoke up Ingraham. "I could start in ten minutes if the doctor would but give the word."

"But the doctor does *not* give the word, Captain Armstrong," interposed Dallas, flushing. "And we will continue this conversation outside, if you please. Ingraham, you are to go to bed, and I shall see to it that you get some sleep. This way, Armstrong," he continued, stepping to the north doorway. "I am responsible for both these men and I shall answer for them and for myself. Chalmers cannot be moved before evening. Ingraham should not be sent to his troop until entirely restored. He is not yet fit for duty,—much less for trial, if that's what's hanging over him."

Armstrong hesitated. "Mr. Kent, here, tells me he has been warned to appear as witness," he finally said. "The case is to be tried before that court now in session at Greble Barracks." They had reached the veranda and the cool outer air now, and could better see each other's faces. "By God, Dallas, you look worse used up than any of us," continued he, plunging recklessly on. "I thought I had as much to swear about as anybody. What does young Columbia want to see our night prowler about?" he closed, abruptly.

"Mr. Kent can tell you," answered Dallas wearily. "Ingraham says he knows, apparently, very much more than anybody else,—very much more than, in fact, ever happened."

Kent flushed under the sting.

"I know what most people at home believe," said he, bluntly, "and at least I have held my tongue and said nothing. If he can clear himself nobody will rejoice more than I, though he chooses to regard me as his personal enemy."

And then, somewhere up the highway to the north, a bugle began to wind the stirring song of the reveille. "We'll miss the drums and fifes of the big brigade," said Dallas, anxious to give a pleasanter tone to the talk. "Which way,—where,—did they go?"

"To Chain Bridge, across and beyond," answered Armstrong, concisely. "The Vermonters and the Sixth Maine preceded them. Shouldn't wonder if it were a move to flank those fellows out of their lines at Munson's Hill. Well," he added, impatiently, "I'm to call for our roof-climbing friend with a closed carriage at six, is it?"

"Call when you please," answered Dallas, "and he'll go when I please, which won't be until he's well enough. Now, gentlemen, you'll excuse me. I've been up all night and I'm going to get an hour's sleep after I've seen to Ingraham. Good day to you, both."

They turned away, the veteran regular, the youthful subaltern, knowing Dallas to have the upper hand of the situation. But that evening at dusk, true to his word, Armstrong was there, carriage and all, and, to the surprise of surgeons and attendants, Chalmers had been declared able to go with him. Still bandaged but on his feet, and most courteously declining assistance, the Southern gentleman bade his physicians adieu, thanking them for their

attention, was shown into the waiting vehicle and driven away. Ingraham, waking from long, deep sleep an hour later, raged at heart when told that he was gone.

A strange thing occurred that evening. Dr. Dallas had been summoned over to Brookside. Mrs. Langdon, it was said, stood in need of his assistance, and he drove away hurriedly within half an hour after Major Chalmers's departure. The soldier nurse who had been in attendance on that gentleman was still delightedly contemplating a ten dollar gold piece that had been slipped into his hand—a gold piece in September, '61!—when Ingraham came angering:—

“You promised me that I should be called just as soon as it was possible for that gentleman to see and talk with anybody,” he exclaimed. “And yet you let me lie there and sleep like a log when you knew he was going away!”

“I couldn't help it, Ingram,” was the instant reply. “I *told* him how much you wished to speak to him—told him when the doctor was out of the room, too, and he said on no account to wake you or let you know he was going. He said he *couldn't* speak with you.”

Then Ingraham sought the office, where a junior surgeon sat in charge, and asked permission to be absent until tattoo—he wished to go to Brookside. The young doctor looked embarrassed:—

“I am sorry, Ingraham,” said he, “but Dr. Dallas received orders in your case this afternoon that—prevent my granting permission. The guard say they have instructions not to let you pass the line of sentries.”

For a moment Rex stood confounded. "I'm really very sorry," continued the young physician, sympathetically, "for you ought to be allowed to walk, exercise, see congenial people, etc. I cannot imagine what it means, and I know Dr. Dallas was much disturbed."

"I'll soon see what it means," said Ingraham, to himself, his teeth setting in his wrath. "This comes of being a Quixotic ass, I suppose, and enlisting, just as most men said I was." He was in no mood to reason,—no mood to act with prudence. Straight to the north wing he went again, to the little room in which Dallas slept when he slept at all. Hanging on the rack were a spare forage cap and the big circular cape of the surgeon's dark blue overcoat. A moment later, in the dusk of the autumn evening, a tall, soldierly form, apparently that of a commissioned officer, with his new McClellan cap pulled well down over his eyes, his cape muffled about his neck and shoulders, stepped confidently forth upon the veranda; answered with easy grace the quick salute of the few soldiers who, at sight of him, sprang to their feet; then strode briskly away toward the little wicker gate nearly two hundred yards north of the main entrance. The sentry there on duty promptly faced outward and snapped his piece to the shoulder, as required by the guard manual of the day. Another moment and Rex Ingraham had crossed the Fourteenth street road and was stalking away for Brookside,—all orders to the contrary set at naught and defied.

CHAPTER XIV

SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE

IT was barely eight o'clock as Ingraham turned into the gateway of Brookside. Unlike the previous evening, the skies were overcast, and a wet wind was sighing through the foliage and stirring the shrubbery about the cosy, hospitable old homestead. He had come swiftly, for his brain was in a whirl and he could brook no delay. He had expected obstacles in the way of patrols or outlying sentries, and had determined to play his part to the end, and, as they said at Columbia, "cheek it" through. But the only patrol he met was in the lane below the Porter mansion, and the non-commissioned officer in charge had promptly ordered "Shoulder arms," and tendered him the sergeant's salute. A few stragglers were encountered, but, so far from impeding his progress, they seemed only too glad that he should not question theirs. He looked the officer as he strode along in the dusty gloaming, and in his reckless, resentful frame of mind he felt that he had too long been playing a part in which he seemed to serve as merely a football for the Fates—a helpless, friendless thing to be kicked into all manner of evil, injustice and wrong, and then, because of his humble sta-

tion, virtually forbidden to lift hand, foot or voice in the effort at self extrication. Suspected and accused of all manner of dishonor at home, he had been held prisoner at the front. Charged with a military crime at the front, he had been robbed of all opportunity of prompt and fair trial by being laid by the heels in hospital. Then when he had been, partly at least, instrumental in running to earth one most valuable witness as to his innocence, lo, the Fates had interposed again and rushed that witness out of the way; Rex knew not whither.

Nor did he know just what it was he sought in taking the law into his hands and going this dark night to Brookside. Vaguely he felt that he *must* see Dr. Dallas and ascertain from him where Chalmers had gone. Vaguely he felt that he must see Winn and ask his counsel—Winn, who at the urgent request of Mrs. Langdon, had returned to remain all night at Brookside, glad indeed to feel that his presence there gave comfort and reassurance to the mother of the girl he now so deeply loved, even though he could not begin to assure himself his presence there was a comfort to Alice. Late in the afternoon he had gone to the Columbian to see how Ingraham was doing, and finding him sound asleep, had tip-toed away rejoicing. Sleep was what the lad most needed.

Vaguely, too, Ingraham had it in mind that from Alice, her mother, or even, if need be, from Agatha he ought to learn something about this man Chalmers who, having so strangely influenced their fortunes in the past was now so intricately entangled in his own. Tricked and buffeted as

he had been by adverse Fate, the time had come, as he declared, when passive submission was no longer tolerable,—when he must rise superior to the trammels of military law and regulation, trample under foot the iron rule of meek, unreasoning obedience—the *role* of dumb, driven cattle, and then, taking up arms against his sea of troubles, oppose and end them.

That in the effort so to do he should succeed only in adding to the volume of his troubles was something he was in no mood to consider. First and foremost he had need to speak with Dallas, and with quick, nervous stride he made straightway for the open door, looking forth upon the steps where they had sat and where Alice had so sweetly sung only twenty-four hours before. Veranda and steps were deserted, even Blondo was not there.

Half way over toward the eastward hedgerow stood a little summer house or arbor, a vine-covered trellis where on pleasant afternoons the ladies of Brookside sometimes sat with their books or needlework, and Ingraham fancied he heard the murmur of voices in that direction. With the doctor's cape still flung over his shoulders, he turned and started thither over the soft, springy turf, his footfalls making hardly a sound. Twenty steps brought him close to the arbor and to an embarrassing situation. A woman was sobbing, a man pleading. It was the deep, honest voice of John Winn, his friend and ally, that came to him, throbbing with pain, yet, even in his sorrow, tempered only by tenderness and pity for the weeping girl at his

side. The old, sweet, sad story was all revealed in the one question :—

“Forgive me, Alice, for the pain it has brought you. Tell me—just one thing, and, if it be as I fear, I will not worry you again. *Is there—another?*” A moment’s silence; a fresh burst of sobs, then: “*There is?—Yes?* Ah, I ought to have known,” and by this time, awed and distressed, an unwilling hearer of his stanch, soldierly comrade’s mournful secret, Ingraham was backing away. He would have given much not to hear. He well knew that now gallant John Winn was indeed sore wounded.

For a few moments he forgot his own need and purpose in the presence of Winn’s deep, manfully borne distress. The major’s open admiration of Alice—his growing love for her—was something all might have seen for long days past, yet in his own selfish sorrow Rex had given it hardly a thought. He felt, rather than knew, that one explanation of the gentle, sympathetic, indeed tender interest the sisters felt in his convalescence lay in the fact that Winn must have told them something of his passion for Editha Raynor and of that petted darling’s cruel neglect of him in his extremity. Something of his own sad story he felt sure they knew, and he had not resented it in Winn that he had told. Ingraham was not yet above finding a certain comfort in being, to a pretty woman, an object of romantic interest. Most men have to be twice his years before that weakness dies,—if ever it does.

But little time was given him for sympathetic grieving. Hardly was he back at the steps when he heard the voice

of Dallas within, and Dallas was coming down stairs accompanied by Mrs. Langdon. They reached the broad hallway. They were speaking of Agatha whom they had just left, and once again Ingraham became inadvertently the recipient of a family confidence.

“What I cannot understand is that he should have ventured here at all—or why he should have restored her letters through Alice. At least he *has* restored them and *that* dread is ended——”

They were coming toward the doorway and Ingraham, throwing off the cape, deliberately stepped into the dim light of the hanging lamp. Dallas was first to see him and abruptly broke off and checked his sister as she in turn began to speak, yet both bent forward and welcomed him cordially. Ingraham lost little time in ceremony:—

“Pardon my being abrupt, doctor, but I feel I must tell you at once. Dr. Schenck told me he could not give me permission to follow you—that you had received orders concerning me, so I came without permission, and in your cap and cape, because I must know where Major Chalmers has gone and whether I cannot follow and find him to-night.”

Dallas gravely shook his head. “You take serious chances, Ingraham, yet I know your need, and I had sent a messenger to General McClellan’s headquarters, asking permission to take you to Chalmers’s lodging at once. It was on that account I was hurrying back to hospital. Your case is to come up for trial——”

“I don’t care how soon or where!” broke in the

younger soldier, "provided I can first see Chalmers. Give me that opportunity and then I'll be glad to face my judges and have this thing over with. Your pardon, Mrs. Langdon," he added, bowing low to her. "I think you know something of my anxieties and will bear with me."

"Not only I, but both my daughters, Mr. Ingraham," she answered, smiling kindly, sadly into his sorrowful eyes. "We have much, it seems, to thank you for, and some day——"

But Dallas would not let her continue.

"Let *me* explain to Ingraham," said he, gently but at once. "And we must return now to see if answer has come. Say good-night to Winn and Alice for me." He looked inquiringly about, then led the way.

A horseman met them at the gate and reined in at sight of the dim shapes in the McClellan caps and officer's dress. "Dr. Dallas?" he inquired, eagerly, and Dallas held forth his hand for the paper the orderly half extended, then sprang from saddle and struck a match. By the flickering light Dallas read just one word, "Approved" of the brief endorsement on his own missive. "Thank you, orderly. Come on, Ingraham," said he, and with swift steps they hastened back to the dusty highway of the Fourteenth street road.

Less than an hour later the ambulance that bore them went bounding along past the west front of the old War Department building, where alert sentries and lounging members of the guard gave the ugly, mustard-colored vehicle barely a glance. They had seen it stopped under

the gas lamp farther up Seventeenth street at the corner of the avenue, as indeed it had been stopped half a dozen times before, while an officer closely scanned the brief official writing on the folded paper handed him by Dr. Dallas. And now it whirled westward and disappeared up the long lane of a side street until its rattling ceased in front of a high-stooped house, standing by itself about the middle of the block and on the north side. Here Dallas and Ingraham alighted, climbed the steps, and the silence of the late September night was broken by the vigorous rat-tat-tat of the old-fashioned brass knocker. The door was not opened until the rap had been twice repeated, and the slats of the closed window blinds had been seen to turn so as to permit a sidelong peep at the shadowy visitors. Then, all on a sudden, the door was thrown wide open, a brilliant light from polished reflector was thrown on the faces of the visitors, and a young man, still holding the knob in his hand, politely inquired what was wanted. "I desire a few words with Major Chalmers on business of importance," said Dallas, holding forth his card. The young man took, read it and looked perturbed.

"Would you mind waiting a moment while I inquire?" said he; then softly closed the door in their faces and as softly stepped back through the hall. It was three minutes before again the door was opened, and there in his place, in the trim-fitting, double-breasted frock of a field officer of the army, stood a tall, distinguished looking soldier whom Ingraham recognized at a glance. He had seen him many a time on Fifth Avenue earlier in the year. He knew

him by repute as one of the "swells" of the old army. He had heard of him as a Southern sympathizer. He had seen him on that eventful day at the New York Hotel. He was *not* one of John Raynor's favorites, notwithstanding his alleged proclivities, but because of tales of card transactions involving young gentlemen of high family in society. Personally Rex had never met him, but one glance at the face of Dallas told that here was a man who had, and who was not overjoyed at meeting him again.

"Ah, Dallas," said the officer, airily, "walk right in. This is an unlooked for honor." But no hand was extended in welcome. Dallas, with a cold bow and a glance at Ingraham that bade him follow, stepped within the hall.

"It is Major Chalmers I desire to see," said he, briefly.

"So his young kinsman tells us, Dallas, but, as you know, Chalmers met with severe injuries, if not indignities, out your way last night. Your friend Armstrong and he in fact seem to have been equally—ah—precipitate, and now we have been trying to get him to sleep——"

"A matter in which I can be of material assistance, if you will kindly show the way," said Dallas, shortly, and with symptoms of much impatience.

"And your—ah—associate?" said the tall soldier with a supercilious and comprehensive glance over Ingraham's plain uniform, destitute of strap or chevron to indicate even the humblest rank—a glance that set Ingraham's nerves on edge.

"My associate, as you call him, is here under the authority of Major General McClellan, sir, and the matter

whereon he needs to see Major Chalmers is strictly private and personal. And now, Major Wallis, I neither understand nor recognize your authority in the premises and must ask you to make no further delay. Our time is precious."

"Step into the parlor, Dr. Dallas, and also you, sir," continued the tall officer. "You will hardly care to interrupt at the moment as Major Chalmers is engaged in bidding—friends—good-night." The parlor was but dimly lighted; the hall was bright. Their conductor, Major Wallis, as Dallas had called him, after motioning each to a seat, tiptoed into the rear room, without turning up the lamp on the center table, and tapped lightly at the door of the narrow hallway beyond. There was a brief, murmured conference; then a swish of skirts was heard, and two women, youthful and slender in form but successfully veiled, passed hurriedly through the hallway, escorted by the youth who first received the visitors from the Columbian. But Dallas, an old resident, recognized two members of a prominent Southern family, and remembered. Then once more came Wallis, formally courteous; ushered them into a little chamber beyond the sittingroom, and closed the door behind them. There on the bed lay Chalmers, still heavily bandaged, and Chalmers feebly held forth his hand.

"I am indebted to both you gentlemen," said he. "How can I serve you now?"

"By answering this question," replied Ingraham, after a moment's thought. "Did you ever send me, Private

Reginald Ingraham, a telegraphic message from New York, care of Captain Winn?"

"Neveh, suh," was the placid response.

"Were you ever entrusted with papers—or authority to act for Mr. Raynor, and to make demands of me?"

Even through the bandages one could detect the surprise in Chalmers's face but the answer was brief, as before:

"Neveh, suh."

There was another moment of silence; then: "You were the first to see me,—to realize my condition—when I was left at Mr. Raynor's the evening of the safe robbery and of the assault on me. Can you remember, and could you swear to it, for I may need witnesses."

"Perfectly, Mr. Ingraham, and at any time you desire," was the reply.

Rex glanced at Dallas, a world of relief and comfort in his tired eyes, then turned to the half blinded invalid again. "You give me more aid than you dream of, sir," said he. "I wish it were in my power to reciprocate. The best I can tell you is that I promptly delivered the little packet you entrusted to my care."

"I know you did, suh. I was sure you would," was the courteous answer. Then Dallas took up the thread, but his voice was cold, his words were measured.

"And now, Major Chalmers, I trust you will answer me as satisfactorily. Will you tell me what on earth induced you, after all that has passed, to venture within the walls of my sister's home?"

But this was another affair—a very different proposi-

tion. For a moment there was no reply. Chalmers lay breathing deeply and in evident pain. A door opposite the one by which they had entered, opening probably into an adjoining room, swung very slightly and softly upon its hinges—an aperture an inch in width appeared, but neither visitor seemed to note it. The eyes of both were fixed on Chalmers's pallid, bandaged face. At length he spoke.

"You have me at disadvantage, Dr. Dallas. I cannot avoid your questions, much less can I answer."

Then all on a sudden that inner door swung wide open and in came a slender little man, dark-eyed, dark haired, dark featured, a delicate type of that almost feminine beauty of the Creole—a little man with twitching, nervous hands, dilated eyes, quivering lips—a little man bristling and bubbling over with overwhelming excitement and agitation. Chalmers saw and started to his elbow, vainly striving to check him. It was futile. "Frenier, go back," he cried, but Frenier heeded not, heard not. Trembling from head to foot he burst forth:—

"You dimmand of my fren' that he say *why* he visit Brrrookside—an' he riffuse; but you shall hear me—*me*." And now up went the voice of Chalmers in eager shout for "Wallis! Wallis!" but Frenier darted forward into the middle of the room. "You shall hear—you who so dimmand." There came the sound of rush along the hallway. "It is bicause he was bidden by—ah!" And the fiery little Southron got no further. The hall door had flung open, and two strides had brought the tall Union officer upon him. White, slender, sinewy hands had

grasped the puny Creole by the throat and were shaking him as a terrier would shake a rat, while from the lips of Major Wallis hissed these singular words:—

“Frenier, you consummate little ass! *Nothing* would excuse what you were trying to say! By heaven, if you attempt to speak I’ll stand you on your head in the bathtub.”

CHAPTER XV

COURT-MARTIAL

A GENERAL court martial was in session at Greble Barracks in the heart of the Capitol City. It was composed entirely of officers of the regular service and therefore only regulars could be ordered before it for trial. Its deliberations were presided over by Lieutenant Colonel Stout, an old school soldier of the old army, who had fought his way with Scott from Vera Cruz to the Belen Gate and bore both the brevets and bullet wounds of Cerro Gordo and Chapultepec. What Stout didn't know of that book of military scriptures called Army Regulations could not be found within its pages. What he knew of anything outside those regulations, the Infantry Tactics of Scott and Hardee, and the customs of the service could be summed up in one word. He was the type of the old time, stiff-backed, straight-laced, brave, butt-headed, obstinate, opinionated veteran whose life for a long dozen of years had been spent at isolated posts on the far frontier, until the war summoned him to Washington for the defense of the national capital. He was not yet done blaspheming over the August and September lists of brigadier generals of volunteers, on which ap-

peared the names of several majors and captains, his juniors, any number of civilians, and worse than all, said he, "a no-account web-foot—a sailor, by gad!" for it was true that a lieutenant of the navy had been named as a brigadier general. Another thing that, as Stout expressed it, "graveled" him was that while he, a lieutenant colonel, was commanding six companies of Foot—a detachment made up from three different regiments of the old army, here was his junior, Wallis, only just promoted major, commanding a big, twelve-company regiment, one of the fine new organizations recently authorized by Congress, officered mainly by picked promotions from the old regiments and by enthusiastic young fellows from famous militia commands like the New York Seventh. Wallis was a brilliant drill-master, a fine instructor and disciplinarian. He had been supplied with three score capital non-commissioned officers, chosen from junior sergeants, corporals and privates of veteran regiments, and in less than no time, it would seem, his recruits had been licked into shape, and in six weeks his regiment, band and all, was a model. Stout couldn't talk of anything but his grievance against the administration and his chagrin because of Wallis, who loved to egg him on:—it distracted his mind from some sore troubles of his own that he mentioned to nobody. Abundant opportunity had he to prod and torment his senior, for, as luck would have it, he had been named second member of the court, with one of his own captains as judge advocate. He sat directly at the right of the presiding officer, and there was fun for that court a dozen

times a day. Stout knew next to nothing of the finer points of military law. Wallis was a past master on courts martial and the rules of evidence, and nothing could exceed the suavity with which he would take exception to ruling after ruling of the president and then, on appeal to the array, the court being cleared, would invariably have his point sustained. Stout was well nigh rabid by the time the third week of the session arrived and the case of the Government vs. Trooper Reginald Ingraham, Company "—," —th U. S. Cavalry was called. And now the court, as though by common consent, turned from levity to business. Every man of its number, with the possible exception of Lieutenant Colonel Stout himself, had heard something of the prisoner, of his history and of the case now before it.

A singular feature of that case was that the prisoner was not confined, with others under general charges, in the general guard-house. He had been brought to the barracks by a detachment of the provost guard and turned over to a blue-eyed, blonde-whiskered officer-of-the-day awaiting him at the adjutant's office. Ingraham flushed at sight of the tall, handsome captain seated there in conversation with the adjutant. He knew him well by sight. The last time he saw him he was striding down Broadway through frantically cheering thousands of citizens, foremost man of the New York Seventh, sergeant commanding its picked Engineer Corps, that April afternoon they marched away to the war. Without a word the captain signed a receipt for the prisoner, standing attention just

within the door, his blankets and bundle of clothing under his arm. Without a word the guard had departed. The adjutant then withdrew, and the tall captain, with a kindly smile on his face, came forward. "Set down that bundle and shake hands, young man," said he. "I know who you are, and—you are among friends." Ingraham was so dazed he could hardly reply. At the tap of the hand bell a young sergeant entered. "Show this man to the room set apart for him and see that he has everything he needs. He will mess with the non-commissioned staff," were the brief orders, and Rex found himself in a clean, airy little box, with a cot bed, washstand, table and writing materials and a lot of books and newspapers. "Dallas's doing," he said to himself, yet Dallas and Wallis, the latter the regimental and post commander, were on terms of only the most distant courtesy.

That evening the Judge Advocate came in to talk over the case. In addition to the charges originally preferred, that stickler for martial propriety, Captain Armstrong, had added another, with a specification alleging that he, Ingraham, had purloined certain portions of the uniform of a commissioned officer, and having been notified of his confinement within the lines of the guard, had arrayed himself in these items, to-wit, one forage-cap and one overcoat-cape, the property of Major Dallas, U. S. A., and, personating an officer, had crossed the guard line and was found outside the same and on the Fourteenth street road about the hour of tattoo, all this on or about the twenty somethingth day of September, at or near the so-called

Columbian hospital, in the suburbs of Washington, D. C. The Judge Advocate wished to know if Mr. Ingraham desired counsel. No less than three officers had expressed a desire to defend him. Ingraham smiled and said no. He had taken counsel with Dr. Dallas and had determined fully what to do. He would plead guilty to each charge and specification, make his statement in extenuation and throw himself on the mercy of the court. "The whole thing," said he, "need not take half an hour." This, too, was practically what stout John Winn had counseled ere he rode away some days before to join his regiment.

The courtroom,—the ante room of the officers' mess,—was well filled with a curious crowd on the following morning when the president rapped for order, and with an armed sentry at his back Rex Ingraham was ushered in. He was dressed in the trim cavalry jacket, and the long, light blue riding trousers then worn by our mounted troops. He bore himself modestly and well, for more than one whisper had come to him that, even if the court were to sentence, there was a commanding general to mitigate, and a President to pardon. If anything, he felt a measure of discontent with the situation because of a fear that more sympathy than justice would be meted out to him. What he longed for was some word that should justify his conduct, even to the wearing of an officer's uniform. But Rex had yet much to learn. With composure and quiet dignity he stood attention and listened to the perfunctory reading of the order convening the court, and when asked if he objected to being tried by any member named therein,

promptly answered, "No sir." Then came the reading of the charges and specifications and then—a slight sensation. An officer, with a young lady on his arm, entered the room, passed behind the Judge Advocate, and the two were shown to seats across the narrow apartment and directly facing the prisoner. At sight of them a hot flush mounted to Ingraham's forehead, and then the Judge Advocate had to repeat his question: "How say you to the first specification of the first charge,—guilty or not guilty?" It was a moment before Ingraham could answer, and when he did it came somewhat as follows:—"Not guilty—er—I mean, guilty, sir." Guilty, too, he pleaded to the others, and in deep confusion took his seat as the Judge Advocate announced the case for the prosecution closed. Then, as Rex once more raised his head, Alice Langdon, seated by her uncle's side, was smiling at him from across the room.

Then Stout was heard. He was glaring portentously down the length of the table, bordered by half a dozen trim-uniformed officers on each side. He had seen all manner of soldiers in his day, he would have declared, but never "quite the likes of this."

"Does this man realize the gravity of his situation, Mr. Judge Advocate?" he demanded. "Have you explained to him that he is entitled to counsel and to plead not guilty if he wants to. Does he understand that he is practically condemning himself to prison for years?"

"He has had every—attention, Colonel Stout," answered the Judge Advocate, placidly. "Perhaps if you

will permit him to go on with his statement he will explain for himself what now passes your, or possibly our, understanding."

Wallis nodded his aristocratic head appreciatively. The other members sat expectant. "Will you read your statement?" asked the Judge Advocate, and with a deprecatory glance across the room, Ingraham arose, took a folded paper from the breast of his jacket, and in the midst of most impressive silence began:—

"I had had no previous experience when, on the morning referred to in the first specification to the first charge, I received Colonel, now General, Hunter's personal instructions to ride ahead, find my way to Arlington and notify Colonel Burnside that the division commander would be at his camp in a few minutes and desired particularly to see him. In my inexperience I conceived it my duty to ride with all reasonable speed and to deliver my message without unnecessary delay. I even imagined it to be the duty of officers, and guards and sentries, of the army to aid a courier going with despatches,—to expedite his efforts in every possible way. I found, to my surprise and presently to my distress, that the very opposite was the rule. I found, except on the length of the Long Bridge, officers, guards and sentries stationed every quarter of a mile who halted me,—were slow in examining my pass,—persisted in doubting and questioning after they had examined it, and so detaining and delaying me on what I considered then and consider now frivolous and trivial pretexts——"

Bang came Stout's fist on the resounding table top. "Stop that!" he shouted. "Mr. Judge Advocate, you should have informed this prisoner that the Court cannot listen to insubordinate criticism of his superiors——"

"Ah—but my dear Colonel," promptly interposed Major Wallis, his aquiline nose and English side whiskers bowed almost to the littered table in the profundity of his salutation to the head of the court, "the—ah,—prisoner is simply stating facts—as to our system, or lack of system, with regard to couriers on the one side and guards on the other—facts that have most important bearing on the matter at issue, and that indeed deserve the attention of this court on other accounts. I beg, in behalf of my associates of this honorable court, that he be allowed to proceed unimpeded. Let us not follow the example of the sentries."

"I dare say he got his ideas from you, Major Wallis. It sounds enough like you——" began the president, haplessly, for, in an instant, Wallis's white hand was raised in deprecation, but not so his voice—for in the same even, modulated tone he promptly spoke again:—

"Then I shall be compelled again, sir, to ask that the court be cleared."

The court was cleared, everybody but the thirteen members thereof and the Judge Advocate finding a way to the open air without, and the sentry supposedly in charge of the prisoner, saluted, gulped, looked unhappily about him, and didn't seem to know just what he ought to do when a major of the medical staff, accompanied by a very pretty, anxious-faced young lady, stepped up to his charge and,

backing him into a corner, engaged him in confidential, inaudible conversation. It occurred to Dallas in a moment that it wasn't fair to the sentry, so he turned to him, smiled reassuringly, and said: "I should have told you, sentry, that I am Dr. Dallas, of the Army, and have been your prisoner's medical adviser for several weeks past. If you will summon your corporal, or the officer of the guard, I will see that you are reassured."

A dozen spectators, civilians, were looking curiously on. A knot of soldiers stood about the adjutant's office a dozen yards away. Out in the barrack square, by squads and companies, the regiment was on drill. It would have been a desperately hopeless thing for the prisoner to attempt to escape even if he cared to do so, which to all, and the best of, appearances, he did not. He was looking down into the faintly blushing face upturned to his, though the soft eyes were frequently shrouded by their white lids and long, sweeping lashes. He was absorbed, so judged the sentry, in what she, the girl, was hurriedly saying. He was trying to listen, but the sentry could not know how far away his thoughts had drifted. Rex Ingraham, even while standing with bowed head and attentive ear, found himself going over again and again in memory, those words of poor John Winn that had revealed both his own deep sorrow and her precious secret—that there was a reason why this sturdy soldier could not hope to win her heart—that there was in fact "another." Rex was wondering if she dreamed that, only a few nights before, he had been near enough to that "other" to put forth his hand, collar

him and proclaim him a prisoner, had not the presence of two of his superiors—two officers of rank in the Army of the United States—prevented his uttering a word at sight of Edouard Frenier.

Most unceremoniously, for that somewhat ceremonious officer, had Major Wallis hustled the little Creole from the room. Most summarily, considering the rank and station of the visiting officer, Dr. Dallas, had the call upon the bed-ridden Chalmers been thereupon brought to a close. Wallis somewhat airily, as was his wont with men who essayed to cold-shoulder him, had inquired of Dr. Dallas if Dr. Dallas desired to further question his friend, Major Chalmers. If so he suggested a visit at some future time, as the unfortunate officer and gentleman had been subjected to a succession of calls, despite the express instructions of his medical adviser to keep quiet and try to sleep. Whereupon Dallas and Ingraham had withdrawn, the former without a word of acknowledgment to either major, the latter with a hurried but sincere expression of thanks to both. And now, for some unaccountable reason, Wallis, as a member of the court, was taking up the cudgels for him, the accused trooper; and Alice Langdon, who had so often, so sympathetically, ministered to him in his slow convalescence and in his selfish grieving, was here, under her uncle's wing to be sure, the only woman of the little group, made up mainly of officers' wives, not attracted by sheer curiosity. Even as he was trying to study it all out, studying the while her sweet, softly flushing face, the court room door was thrown open by the Judge Advo-

cate and, following the accused and his soldier guardian, the spectators again came trooping in.

"The objection of a member of the Court," said the Judge Advocate, briefly, "is not sustained. The accused may proceed with his statement."

Wallis looked precisely as *nonchalant* as before; some of the junior members very conscious, but the president could not be seen. He had retired behind a newspaper. Once more Rex Ingraham read on:—

"Instead of gaining on the General and his staff I found, after finally reaching the Virginia shore, that they were gaining on me,—that my mission was being rendered abortive, notwithstanding my best efforts, and when finally, at the forks of the road, neither sentry nor sergeant could be induced to do anything to summon their officer from the sutler shop, it seemed to me as though they were determined to prevent my carrying out my instructions,—the senior division commander's orders, and I determined to push ahead. If it had been night instead of day I would have been helpless, because compelled by every sentry every few hundred yards to dismount before approaching him, but it was bad enough as it stood. Believing as I did and do that I and my general were being made the victims of the 'little brief authority' vested in what I have since learned was some raw militia, I put spurs to my horse intending to dash by the sentry. He threw himself in the way and was, I am told, knocked over. I never stopped to see. If I have been guilty of a military crime it was because of a zealous desire to carry out my orders, and

even now I protest that it seems to me that the system is more at fault than I—and that I have been more sinned against than sinning.”

The newspaper at the head of the table showed symptoms of violent agitation, but never a peep at the president's face, which spectators farther up the room later declared at this juncture to have been apoplectic to a dangerous degree.

“As for the specification to the second charge, to which I have pleaded guilty, I beg leave to say that after my long illness, complicated with accusations against my character as a soldier at the front and as a man at home, I was confronted with the possibility of losing the most valuable testimony that could be offered in my defense. I saw then but one way to reach the witness and that was through the surgeon in charge, whom I believed to be at a private residence half a mile away. I saw but one way of reaching that surgeon. In my dress as a private soldier no sentry would permit my passing. In an officer's cap, cape and the darkness no sentry, probably, would prevent. I declined the commission of an officer in the regular service three months ago, because I thought I did not know enough. I have learned so much in the course of three months in the ranks that I accepted this, the only chance I had of reaching the only friend I seemed to have among those who could possibly aid me. Under similar circumstances I should do it again, and now I stand ready to submit to any punishment this honorable court may deem adequate. I ask no mercy whatsoever.”

The dead silence that for a moment followed the closing words of this most unconventional statement was broken by the abrupt fall of the newspaper and the grating voice of Lieutenant Colonel Stout.

"It's tantamount to defiance!" said he. "The man ought to be put in irons!"

"Not—a—yet, perhaps, Colonel Stout, if you will permit," blandly suggested Major Wallis, covering a painful situation, as the Judge Advocate, with something like reproach in his manner, notified the prisoner to withdraw and nodded to the sentry to follow him. Dallas was on his feet at once and hurrying after him. Alice Langdon, uncomprehending yet vaguely conscious that their high-spirited patient had in some way grievously harmed his own case, strove to rise and rejoin her uncle, but found herself flanked by sympathetic women who begged her to come to their quarters and partake of that feminine solace, a cup of tea, and rest a while before driving back to Brookside. The court room was being rapidly emptied of all save the members, and when the ladies reached the outer air Dallas had disappeared. Rex had been taken back to his room. Thither Dallas had gone in pursuit, and all about the shaded barrack walks men were eagerly talking of the really sensational close of the brief, untrying trial, for trial as such there had been none,—the accused having pleaded guilty throughout, left no need of witnesses for the state, and Ingraham had declined to summon witnesses as to character. Many declared that in ten minutes the court would finish its brief deliberation, would

confirm the plea of the accused, find him guilty, and, in view of his declaration that he stood ready to repeat one of his offenses and to defend the other, there was nothing for it but give him as sentence the full extent of the law. Nine men out of ten, the lingering spectators held to this theory and wanted to see the court come out, but it didn't come. Its orderly stood in front of the closed door to warn off possible intruders. Fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes passed and the door remained tight shut. Not until the drums were banging "Roast Beef of Old England" did the members of the court come straggling forth, and everybody who could read the signs knew well there had been a battle royal before they decided upon a sentence. What this might be no one but the reviewing authority, the general commanding the district, might yet know.

Late that afternoon the young adjutant tapped at the door of the little room wherein Ingraham sat writing, and the imprisoned soldier arose and respectfully stood attention at sight of his visitor.

"Ingraham," said he, "I do not know whether to be glad or sorry. I do not know whether it is to be release or punishment, but we are ordered to send you at once to your troop, and Dr. Dallas has sent his ambulance for the purpose."

"They are quartered only two squares away, sir. I can easily walk," said Rex.

"They *were*," was the answer, "but yesterday they were sent to camp out across the Chain Bridge where our people are fortifying the heights. You have friends there,

I understand, among the staff officers of that Western Brigade. Get ready, quick as you can."

Silently, yet in wonderment, Rex obeyed. Two infantry soldiers jumped into the ambulance after him, and they drove briskly away. A corporal, seated beside the driver, answered the challenge of sentries and pickets as they went on up the wooded banks of the beautiful river, but it was dusk when they reached the Chain Bridge and dark when they reached General Smith's headquarters a mile beyond. "The troop is half a mile further out. Take the upper road at the fork, the one toward Lewinsville," said a voice at the gateway, and again they trundled on. Every now and then there would be a shout of "Halt" from the darkness in front. The mules would shy violently before being pulled up. The corporal would clamber down from the front seat and go boring through the darkness in the direction of the hail, say something inaudible except to the challenging sentry, then scramble up again, and order "Drive on." In this way they plunged ahead into the night, the camp fires thinning at the roadside. A sentry bade them go about quarter of a mile straight on and they'd see the new white tents of the troop in a field to the right of the road, and barely five minutes later "Halt! Who goes *thar?*" came a challenge from a clump of scrub oak, and again the corporal sprang down and pushed ahead. There was a moment's murmured conference; somebody said "All right. Come on with your ambulance." The whip cracked, the mules started, the light vehicle bounded over the ruts and once again

reined up, this time in the thick timber and the midst of a number of dark, shadowy forms of armed men, one of whom clambered on the rear step and drawled, "I reckon I'll have to trouble you gentlemen to step out a moment. You may not belong hyuh at all, but we're glad to see you all the same. We're the First Virginia Cavalry."

CHAPTER XVI

THE FACE IN THE FIRELIGHT

WHEN the findings and sentence of the general court-martial in the case of Trooper R. Ingraham, —th Cavalry, were published late in October the person most interested was apparently the least concerned. He was almost the only man either connected with or cognizant of the case to make no comment whatsoever. In point of fact he neither heard, saw, nor asked to know the result until many a day after it had been talked threadbare in the camps about Washington. Then it came to him in so odd a way, and through so unlooked for a channel, that he marveled less over the final disposition of the matter than he did over his means of information.

Locally, in the regimental camps in front of Chain Bridge, it outranked as a sensation anything that had happened since that wonderful day when the Vermont brigade was drawn up in hollow square to witness the execution of one of their number for sleeping on post, and saw instead the dramatic incident of his being led blindfolded to the edge of the grave prepared for him, and there pardoned at the last moment by the merciful President whose

name, six months later, was last on the soldier's lips as he fell in the dash on the Southern lines at Lee's Mills. Modified excitement and sensation there had been, it is true, when that yellow ambulance, with its sleek mule team and quartette cargo of soldiery—three of them armed—was swallowed up in darkness in front of the Forks and coolly appropriated by a venturesome dozen of Jeb Stuart's gay young gallants who had trotted over from Fairfax "just for a flyer," and, stealing upon the outlying sentry soon after nightfall, had noiselessly throttled him; had then "persuaded" him to give the night signal for his corporal; had just as noiselessly and effectively "gobbled" that eager young non-commissioned officer and the two men of the support that came with him. Then, with praiseworthy desire to practice picket duty as taught by the Yankees, had silently occupied their station one hundred yards back along the leafy roadway, and there patiently waited for something to turn up, two of their number obligingly venturing close to the camp fires seen twinkling through the low-hanging foliage, and there contributing to the successful result by steering such military wagons or wayfarers as happened along, straight to the arms of this impudently roystering party within the Union lines. They had trapped a six-mule team with a load of fresh bread from the Capitol bakery, three bibulous stragglers wrangling over the shortest way to camp, and finally Dr. Dallas's own ambulance, with its human freight, before anybody about the Union camps had the faintest inkling of what was going on. With these trophies of their

skill and daring, the Virginians had ridden rejoicefully back through wood roads thoroughly well known to them, and there was mirth, music and apple jack in abundance the rest of the starry autumn night.

Not until late the following morning was Ingraham summoned from the comforts of a straw and blanket bed in a farmer's barn near Fairfax. He had surprised himself by sleeping soundly and well—a thing he thought impossible when his gray-jacketed guardian bade him make himself “at home in the hay.” A year later he would have been invited to swap those substantial, old-time, government blankets for the weather-beaten tatters tendered him by some guileless son of the South, and those were invitations, like some we know of in Society, unwelcome but imperative. The glamour of chivalry was not yet gone when Rex was so very inopportunately captured in front of Chain Bridge. Their captors gave him and his fellows a good breakfast, then sent them on their way, trudging afoot now between flanking, black-plumed, gray-clad troopers. They were destined for Centerville and a cross-questioning the like of which one at least of their number had never before encountered. They were the first prisoners to be taken from the lines of the big brigade that had exasperated the Virginians by sneaking across by night, throwing up fortifications on the “sacred soil,” and bidding defiance to Stonewall Jackson, or any other division leader, should he come that way, and now our American cousins in the fade-faded gray were eager to return the call of their blue-coated enemy and send him in

confusion back to the northern shore of the Potomac ; only —there were wise heads among the elders who bade them wait until they learned something definite about what was behind “ Baldy ” and beyond the bridge. They knew all about what was on the Virginia side.

Wearied with unaccustomed marching, and depressed by this new freak of ill fortune, Ingraham was in no mood to be either courteous or complaisant when, just after candle light that evening, he was brought before two officers in new and natty gray uniforms—one of them evidently a soldier of rank and distinction. Rex knew he was in the presence of one of the old army the moment he set his tired eyes upon him. The trim, double-breasted frock coat he wore was adorned with the insignia of a colonel of cavalry. He was tall, erect, martial-looking,—cavalier, too, though much of his handsome face was concealed by the full flowing beard and moustache. He was a gentleman, a thoroughbred, moreover. The very tone, the courtesy of manner, with which he addressed the prisoner-private-soldier spoke infallibly as to that.

“ You have had a long march and must be tired. Take a seat, sir,” said he. And Ingraham as quietly obeyed. The Southern colonel looked at him curiously, his blue eyes half veiled by their heavily fringed lids.

“ You—are but recently enlisted, I am told, and I reckon you are in the ranks of the regulars rather as an experiment—a stepping-stone to a commission, probably. Who commands your troop?”

"I don't know, sir," was the answer, prompt, positive, yet perfectly calm as to tone and manner.

"That seems—unusual. I happen to have served some years in the Federal cavalry," said his interrogator, while the junior officer sat tapping his teeth with the butt of his pencil, waiting for something worth recording.

"As a result of the first month's observation, I should say the first sergeant," proceeded Ingraham, whereat the colonel permitted himself to smile whimsically in appreciation. "Since the first month I have seen nothing of my troop. I have been a patient in hospital or a prisoner under guard. By this time I probably should have known what officer commanded the troop, if any, but for the enterprise of your people." The colonel half bowed at the implied compliment. He was enjoying the situation. Rex was not.

"Then you expected to find your troop out in front of General Smith's infantry?" said the colonel. "It must have moved there within two days."

Rex bit his lip. His attempted pleasantry had revealed just what he should have kept to himself. But, after all, what difference did it make? This superior officer of confederate cavalry seemed thoroughly well informed of the movements of the Union forces,—at least of those on the Virginia side of the Potomac. Yet the colonel had more to ask.

"Did you happen to see Major Wallis again before you left Greble Barracks?"

Ingraham fairly started. Verily, in everything he had

managed to read of war history or war romance he had encountered nothing like this. Here sat enthroned on the little wooden dais, or platform, of what might have been the school house of this rural village in old Virginia, with his adjutant or secretary taking notes at the shabby wooden table close beside him, a colonel of Confederate cavalry who seemed on terms of easy intimacy with prominent officers of the Union Army in Washington and quite as easily intimate in his knowledge of the goings and comings of officers and men, even down to private troopers, inconspicuous as Ingraham considered himself. The colonel saw his bewilderment and quietly smiled again.

"The major and I were much together at one time on the frontier," said he, "and I was his guest a few days last winter in New York. I am sorry Wallis did not know you were coming this way. I think he might have sent me a message. Now, will you tell me whether you have met Major Chalmers since the night you went with Dr. Dallas?"

For a moment there was silence. Ingraham sat in a sort of daze, staring at his examiner, and wondering whether that examiner did not know, and could not tell if he saw fit, far more about his, Ingraham's, official past and soldier haps and mishaps than he himself. The colonel had been in the regular cavalry. He had visited New York shortly before the outbreak of the war. He had known Major Wallis, and now he was asking for tidings of Major Chalmers and professing to be well informed as to that visit with Dr. Dallas. But Chalmers had twice befriended

him and no harm could happen to Chalmers, as it happened, by the telling of the truth, so—

“ I have not set eyes on him,” was the final answer.

“ You have been in communication, however,” said the Confederate colonel. “He wrote to you, at least.”

“ He did—on a purely personal matter, sir. Fortunately for me Major Chalmers was able to give important evidence in a matter involving my good name. The letter is by now in the hands of my legal adviser, Mr. Watson, in the City of New York, or you should see it. Major Chalmers, knowing what this was worth to me was so thoughtful as to write before he left Washington.”

“ Then you think he has—left Washington ?” said the colonel, interrogatively, and the blue eyes scanned the captive trooper, narrowly.

“ I only think so because his letter began ‘ Before leaving Washington I desire,’ etc.”

The colonel’s handsome head drooped forward upon his breast. For a moment he seemed lost in thought. Then the long, white, shapely fingers began to stroke the glossy beard, and again the blue eyes sought the careworn, anxious face before him.

“ Mr. Ingraham,” said he, “ I happen to be so placed as to know something of your affairs. Business with Mr. Raynor, among other things, took me to New York. I have met Mr. Watson of whom you speak. I have reason to be aware of the fact that Mr. Raynor, with his daughter and certain—agents—of ours went to England on the *Endymion*,—that Mr. Raynor’s health has been somewhat

benefited, and that by the advice of physicians he is to spend the winter at Nassau. I knew of your mishap in New York because it financially involved a friend of mine. I have even heard how your good name has suffered. In point of fact, Mr. Ingraham, it is my belief that at this moment you have more friends in the South than you have—at home.”

Ingraham looked up quickly. Was it possible that the Southern leader sought to tempt him from his allegiance.

“All the same,” said he, with just a bit of the sophomorical in his words and manner, “to the North—to the Union I belong in spite of either false friends or—too generous foes.”

“Do not misunderstand me, suh,” said the colonel, very quietly and with a perceptible lapse into dialect, a quizzical smile meantime playing somewhere among the roots of those twirling moustaches. “It will be a long time, I reckon, before we have to begin buying soldiers from your side; although,” after a moment’s pause and very drily, “you seem to have paid round sums for a few of ours. How soon does Major Chalmers expect to get his brigadier-generalship, do you think?”

Ingraham flushed. He knew well what aspersions had been cast throughout the country upon the characters of men like Scott, Harney, Robert Anderson, George H. Thomas and others of the old army, who, Southern born, had remained true to the flag. He had heard in many a way how each in turn had been accused of everything from mere selfish indifference to a Judaslike sale of services for

alien gold. He had heard, on the other hand, how even such faithful, loyal men as Thomas, furiously denounced by kith and kin, were objects of suspicions at the War Department because of the dread that Southern influence might yet prevail. He had yet to hear of a single case where Southern soldiers had been bought, though it was known that Scott had hoped to the last to hold men like Lee of Virginia, and Martin of North Carolina, loyal to the old flag for which, with him, they had so gallantly battled in Mexico. Rex had not yet learned to be tolerant of "the point of view." He could not know how it amazed and angered Virginia that so many of her sons had flung to the winds the dogma of state sovereignty, and had stood firmly for the cause of the Union. He could not in his irritation answer the Virginian at all. It was the latter who finally spoke:—

"We will say no more of that, sir," said he, courteously. "You know, it is evident, very little of Major Chalmers's movements or—aspirations. Now, I assume that you would be glad of an exchange, despite that possible sentence, and I take it you wish to get back to your troop and not, at least, to one of our prisons. Do you care to give your word not to attempt to escape? It is a privilege we accord officers and—gentlemen."

A cavalry trumpet, sounding on the still autumn air, began the notes of tattoo. The candle on the battered desk was flickering. A pattering of hoofs on the stony pike without told of the passing of a small body of Horse, and a sentry's voice somewhere along and across the highway

was uplifted in a shout for the much-demanded "Corp'l of the Gua-a-a-ard," and still Ingraham sat gloomily, without a word, studying his soldier inquisitor. It was the colonel who brought the interview to a close:—

"Silence, in this case, Mr. Adjutant, does not give consent. See that for the night Mr. Ingraham is made as comfortable as possible," and with that, and without another word, he arose and left the room. The young staff officer wrote a few lines in pencil, then called for the sentry. Two gray-clad troopers, one a corporal, stalked in and saluted. "Done with the prisoner," said the adjutant, and, like his commander, went forth without another word. The corporal slowly read the penciled words, looked queer, and tucked the paper under his waistbelt. "This way," said he to Ingraham, and stared hard at him as, under charge of a cavalry guard, our luckless trooper dragged wearily forth into the night.

Five minutes later Ingraham found himself, to his mute surprise, seated at a little table, in a bare little room, in an humble little cottage on the southern skirts of the village. Corn bread, coffee and ham, smoking hot, were set before him. An old darky was spreading his blankets on a narrow little cot. His companions in captivity had disappeared. He was being civilly, kindly, courteously treated by the half dozen Virginia troopers who surrounded him. He could not understand it. He could only rejoice when, filled and comforted, and oh, so wearied, he could throw off his boots and outer clothing and with the weird plaint of the whippoorwills coming faintly to his drowsy ears,

go drifting off into dreamless sleep, with never a thought for the morrow.

Twenty-four hours later and, in another little cottage—built homestead, after another hearty supper and much less fatigue and excitement, he was kicking off his cavalry boots and thinking over the adventures of the second day. They had roused him for breakfast only when the sun was two hours high, and then with an apology. These were still, it must be remembered, the early days of the war, and there was about him the glamour of a strange story—something to the effect that he was under the especial protection of so famous a Virginia soldier and gentleman as Colonel Stuart—"Jeb" Stuart,—that he was being escorted to a place of comfort and safety where he could recuperate at leisure from a long, serious illness and imprisonment for which the Yankees were responsible; that they had court-martialed him and sentenced him to be shot for something he had done out of sympathy for the South. But their courtesy was all inexplicable to Ingraham to whom, of course, they spoke not of their theories. The cavalry about Centerville had marched away when, at nine o'clock, he was aided into saddle. Then new conductors—a corporal and two troopers—Virginians all—led him away southward, sometimes at the fox trot, sometimes at easy walk, occasionally at an easy lope along a red mud roadway that, soon after ten and after winding among thick woods, dove into a shallow, turbid, sleepy stream, through which their horses splashed and nuzzled their unurged way. "Bull Run," said one of the riders,

laconically. "Bla-a-ackbuhn's Fawd," and then they ambled on up the wooded slopes beyond and later and finally emerged on a high plateau, open to the north where red ditched redoubts and earthworks seamed the approaches from that direction, and white tents were pitched and rude shelters were scattered far and near, and stores were being unloaded from long trains of freight cars, and there was a tavern and a little 'cote house' or town hall and there were many homes and cottages along the road running parallel with the railway, and a big watertank stood far out to the west where one track led away through the woods southwestward and another curved toward the distant rift in the line of dark blue hills, through the woods northwesterly, and here they told him he might have to wait two or three days, "the general being away at the front." They had brought him books and papers. He had read, rested and dozed all the afternoon, and was therefore wakeful when he went to bed, wakeful when the guard was changed at midnight, wakeful when, in low, cautious tone he heard some hours later the whisper of his name, and starting to an elbow rest he became aware of a shadowy form close beside him, and in the flickering firelight caught a glimpse of a bearded face, and then, in a voice he recognized at once, these stirring, even startling words:

"Not a minute to lose, Ingraham, and just one chance of escape—dare you take it?"

CHAPTER XVII

THE SENTRY'S POTION

REX sat bolt upright in bed and rubbed his eyes. The embers of the wood fire on the open hearth threw but a dim light around the bare little room and all too faintly disclosed the lineaments of the speaker. But it was the voice, not the shadowy face of his visitor that he so quickly recognized. Through the uncurtained window peeped the stars of the northern heavens. Through the open doorway came the sound of measured footsteps, those of the slow-pacing sentry at the front. Earlier in the night there had been two such guardians, one opposite each entrance to the hallway that, Southern fashion, traversed the width of the building, piercing it from front to rear, from east to west. So far as Rex could judge by the sound, or lack thereof, the sentry in the little garden back of the house had ceased to walk post. From the rear, presumably, his nocturnal visitor had found a way to the prisoner's bedside, and now stood there silent, expectant. The voice of Major Chalmers had asked that stirring question. A face that, in shadowy outline at least, had little the look of Chalmers, was turned upon him, awaiting his reply.

“It must be Major Chalmers,” said Ingraham, somewhat dazed, “yet—if you had not spoken—”

“It is Chalmers, to you at least; but unhappily, to no one else, just now. Mr. Ingraham, I repeat that you have not a moment to lose, and but one chance of escape. Will you take it?”

Rex hesitated. He knew next to nothing of this strange man whose life seemed wrapped in mystery, this man disliked by Northern gentlemen like Dallas, and sneered at by Southern cavaliers like Stuart. He was grateful to Chalmers for an outspoken and vehement letter that might be of value and weight in setting him right at home. He had been greatly prepossessed in Chalmers's favor during the brief interview broken in upon by that feather-brained, impetuous Creole, Frenier. He had felt in some inexplicable way drawn to Chalmers, but when it came to placing himself unreservedly in the hands of one so entirely a stranger, risking his life in some mad attempt to escape from conditions that, thus far at least, were much more interesting than vexatious, there was reason for demur. He had been captured through no fault or neglect of his own. He had been treated with remarkable courtesy. He seemed rather a prisoner of state than a private in the ranks. Chalmers, impatiently eyeing him, read possibly what was passing in his mind.

“If you are hesitating because of any idea that you are indebted to Colonel Stuart or his people for courtesies extended, why, dismiss it. He and they now are off for the Valley, and you will be off for Richmond before you are

six hours older." The face that bent masterfully over him was bearded and spectacled, and Rex noted with distrust and asked with distinct emphasis:—

"Will you tell me why you, among your own people, should be disguised?"

"I will tell you as we go, but go we must before dawn or go not at all, except to prison." And Chalmers turned and listened anxiously at the door, then glanced eastward from the window.

"I should find friends at Libby, as luck would have it," said Ingraham, swinging his legs out of bed and groping for his socks.

"Libby! Man alive, there is no room even now at Libby for any one but officers! You would go to Belle Isle or some tobacco yard at best. You might never get back to New York—where you should be at this minute."

"There would be no seeing John Raynor," was the answer. "They are taking him to Nassau."

"Granted. But John Raynor is not the man you most need to see, nor is his friend and financial backer, Watson. Unless I am mistaken, sir, you need that young man Burnham, and he should be in New York before Thanksgiving. Are you ready, sir, or do you prefer prison life for the winter?"

For answer Rex stood in his stocking feet and reached for his cavalry trousers.

"Not those," said Chalmers, hurriedly, and tossed upon the cot a bundle from beneath the cape of his great coat—a great coat of heavy Charlottesville cloth, in shade and

texture much like those worn by Virginia officers, but in cut and finish more closely resembling the French military cloak-coat of the period. The bundle was opened in an instant. It contained a sack suit of civilian dress, some shirts and collars and a broad-brimmed, soft felt hat. "Get into these at once," said Chalmers. "Pull your riding boots over the trousers and leave your trooper things as souvenirs, then join me at the rear door."

In less than ten minutes Ingraham stepped forth upon the narrow wooden porch at the back of the house. There was Chalmers bending over a limp form, bolstered against one of the uprights. It was the sentry, already nearly stupefied. "One more," Chalmers was saying, soothingly. "Just a swallow. It will make your hair curl," and the poor lad obeyed, rolled helplessly over, and buried his sodden face in his arms.

"They really shouldn't put men on guard, these frosty nights, without either overcoat or blanket," said Chalmers. "That young fellow was shivering from head to foot and was blue and numb with cold when I offered him my flask an hour ago. I'll leave it to explain matters to the corporal when he comes round—which is more than the sentry will do within the hour. Now, sir."

War is war, but Ingraham turned and looked back regretfully ere they reached the fence. The dim figure lay there helpless, inert. The morrow would bring heavy reckoning for a luckless lad, far from his home among the magnolias and orange groves along the gulf, set to sentry duty in thin gray cassimere and a north Virginia cloudless

night, with the first frost nipping the leaves from their twigs and showering the dewy grass with red and gold. Chalmers noted the halt and falter. "I know it," said he. "God grant we have to resort to nothing worse before the war's a year older. Come! The horses and our guide are not forty rods away."

Three days later they were trotting briskly along an old plank road. The morning air was keen and so were their appetites. The sun was just peeping above the dense tangle of trees and timber beyond the cleared field to their right. They had slept at a woodman's cabin some distance off the highway, but thither Chalmers had led, with confidence serene. The beard and spectacles had been discarded before they were two hours away from Manassas Junction, following their farm boy guide through wood and bridlepath that twisted and turned bewilderingly; hiding all day after sun up in a dense coppice, where lop-eared rabbits came and peered at them and tilted nervously away. Long hours of the first night out they rode again in the track of their taciturn, tobacco-chewing guide, and slept at last with their feet to the embers in a woodman's cabin. At sunrise they were off again, their horses baited, their own needs supplied, for Chalmers carried coin as well as the Navy Colt, and knew how to use both. At noon, on the banks of a swirling, red muddy stream they parted with their silent conductor, whose sallow, sombre features never relaxed even when he glanced at the heavy yellow disks that were pressed into his palm. They splashed through a ford, their feet tucked up cantlewards,



"THREE DAYS LATER THEY WERE TROTTING BRISKLY ALONG AN OLD
PLANK ROAD"

the waters foaming about their mettlesome chargers' breasts. Emerging, they turned to their left along the right bank of the stream, finally coming again into thick woods, the sun wearing round to the off side as they rode and finally streaming squarely over the right shoulder when they unsaddled for their needed rest. Now Chalmers seemed on more familiar ground. Occasionally they passed some charcoal furnace or mud-chinked cabin, where lank, bearded men asked eagerly for news and got it,—always the same: General Beauregard's army was pressing close on the Yankee lines in front of Washington. Strong reinforcements were reaching him every day. Any hour now he might burst through and then his guns would bring the capitol and treasury building tumbling about the ears of the defenders, unless, indeed, these latter, seeing their hopeless plight, were forced to blow up the public buildings and fall back to the Pennsylvania mountains, leaving Maryland free to welcome the deliverers. Rex no longer marveled at Chalmers's persuasive powers. There was something inexpressibly frank, cordial, winning in his way of greeting all men. They had met no soldiery, not even a cavalry patrol, and had heard of none once they were safely across the Rappahannock. They had been dexterously guided through an almost unknown tract, midway between the railway to Culpeper and the parallel reach of the Potomac to Acquia. The very few cross-roads, mere bridle or cart tracks, had been approached only after careful reconnoissance on part of their conductor. They successfully evaded flankers from the line of

the railway and those from the scattered corps of observation along the Prince William and Stafford banks of the lordly river. They had crossed the Rappahannock at low water, and had come within easy ride of the Fredericksburg Pike when they made their second camp for the night, and during these eventful hours Rex Ingraham had learned much of Hugh Chalmers that he had never dreamed before. His father, a Virginian and a soldier of the Tippecanoe days, had died when he was but a lad. His mother, a gentlewoman of the old Empire State, had survived her husband many years, dying at last only a few weeks before the fall of Sumter, leaving to her only son the homestead at Fredericksburg, the care of two children—his own,—a daughter of fourteen, a son of ten. From his wife, a woman who had fascinated him when he was a cadet, and for whose sake he had resigned from the army, after winning brevets and honors in the Mexican war, he had been separated for several years, she going abroad. In '59 came the news of her death in Paris; in January, 1861, the further news from our minister at Rome, that she was there, living in apparent ease and luxury as Madame la Comtesse de Chevreuil. There had been no divorce. His mother, he himself and his children were of the church that forbids it. Two promises that mother had begged of him with her dying breath—first, that he should never draw sword against the flag for which he and his father, both, had fought, and that he, at least, had been educated and sworn to serve. Second, that he should never seek another wife so long as the first should

live. She only vaguely dreamed that, while believing that erring woman dead, her son had met and loved Agatha Langdon.

"I am bound by my promise not to fight against the old flag," said Chalmers, with bowed and humbled head. "But I could not bring myself to war against Virginia. I, who love it as I love no other career, can never hope again to be a soldier."

"I understand so much now that was incomprehensible—that night at Brookside," said Ingraham, after a long pause. "I can see how much more I owe you than I had begun to imagine."

"That was another promise, Ingraham," said Chalmers, simply, yet solemnly. "Not to my mother, but to—her. She wrote me while I lay there in Washington—to promise, if ever I knew you to be in peril, to do my utmost to free you." Then, as though suddenly recollecting himself, with abrupt change from grave to gay: "And there's Burton's—and breakfast, and I'm sharp set. Come on!" So saying the Virginian swung his hat about his shapely head. His mettlesome bay sprang forward at the light touch of the spur, and with the planks resounding under his flying hoofs, went bounding eagerly toward a little farmhouse in the midst of a clearing to the left of the road. Ingraham, who longed to ask one more question, could only give his plunging mount his head and let him follow the leader until they reined up, with much barking of dogs and cackling of excited barn fowl in front of the rambling homestead. Several small children and some

pop-eyed darkies were the first denizens to appear. But presently out came the proprietor and his helpmate, all gladness at sight of Chalmers and full of hospitable invitation to let the boys take their "critters" to the barn and come right in to breakfast. "My friend, Mr. Worth, of Washington," said Chalmers, by way of introducing Ingraham, and as "Mr. Worth of Washington," Rex did full justice to the bacon and hominy, corn bread and coffee the good woman of the farm kept setting before him. It was to her and the tow-headed youngsters he addressed his conversation, for Chalmers and the owner were in eager, low-toned talk almost from the moment they took seats at the table. Rex could see, when at last they rose, that Chalmers was anxious. The horses were sent for and came trotting up, refreshed and cheered with corn and water. Oats were already a scarce commodity. Burton held the major's stirrup as he mounted, and his serious, up-turned face never quit its gaze at the scarred yet handsome features of the elder man, until civility required he should shake hands with and say good-bye to Mr. Worth. "There must have been over a hundred of 'em camped opposite Dowdall's—right in the church enclosure, two nights ago," he was saying to the one, as he held forth a hand to the other. "And they went on into Fredericksburg yesterday morning." Rex could see that he was thinking of and for Chalmers—another evidence how, in the neighborhood of his home and among these simple country folk at least, the Mexican war major was regarded. Ingraham wondered what would be the result were

Chalmers to reveal the fact that here was an escaped Yankee, escaped through his, Chalmers's, active aid. Burton probably would have shown more interest in his visitor had that been done. As it was, Burton had hardly eye or word for any one but the major, and no sooner were they well away from the gate than Rex sought to know the meaning of his companion's evident concern.

"It is a scouting party, sent out from Culpeper a few hours after we left the Junction, and ordered by wire, I reckon. Burton said the officers asked if I had passed westward within a day or two. Why, I haven't been near Fredericksburg since you saw me in Washington, but I *was* at Centerville when you were brought in, though Jeb Stuart never knew it. Let us lope a bit. We must get over ground this morning." So, before Rex could ask his next question, they plunged through a little rivulet and found themselves at the edge of the most extensive clearing they had yet encountered. A mile away out to their right front, the east, was a two-storied building with a porch to the north, and sheds and a barn at the back. Directly ahead of them, beyond some intervening snake fence stood the inevitable Virginia country church. Across the open fields, directly north, was another farmhouse at the edge of what was doubtless some broad thoroughfare, and presently they turned as it came in from the west, and followed it straight away toward the belt of forest that spread north and south across the dusty turnpike, perhaps quarter of a mile beyond what proved to be a country tavern at the southward edge of the high-

way. "Dowdall's," said the major, with a cheery hilloa to an old man seated on the porch, "and Chancellor's is less than two miles further, but we'll circle round that to the northward. They's most too hospitable thereabouts,—want us to stop and sample apple jack by the gallon."

"Major Chalmers!" suddenly cried Ingraham. "Look! There are cavalry!" and he pointed straight ahead down the long, gloomy aisle through the thick forest.

"You're right, by heaven!—and coming this way," answered Chalmers. "Quick. Follow me!" And setting spurs to his fine bay, the Virginian leaped him easily over a low panel of fence to his right hand, Rex's mount following promptly, and, in another moment, both riders were galloping swiftly over the fields, circling gradually round to the east. Here they dove once more in among the scattered trees and came presently upon a bridle path that led southeastward, and here, a dozen rods further along at a sharp turn, Chalmers's spirited horse shied suddenly at a rabbit that darted across the track, and dove like a shot beneath some low-hanging branches. There was no time to dodge. The dashing rider was swept instantly out of saddle and hurled senseless to the ground. A moan of anguish was the only answer Ingraham could obtain, as a moment later, he bent over and, fanning him with his broad-brimmed hat, strove to call him to consciousness. The effort was vain. One arm, it was evident, was broken above the elbow, and what was most to be feared was internal injury. Five, ten minutes Rex strove to revive him, dashing water from their one canteen upon his pallid

face, forcing a few drops of brandy down the resisting throat, but still the Virginian lay in almost deathlike swoon. Rex could bear the strain no longer. As gently as possible he drew him further in among the trees; propped his head beneath a sapling; then, mounting again, rode a short distance down to where the bay stood trembling; caught the trailing rein and led him westward through the woods. To Dowdall's he dare not go. By this time the cavalry would be there. Back, back to Burton's, with all speed, was the only way to help. And so, twisting and turning but keeping the sun ever over his left shoulder and the open fields well out to his right, he found again the purling "branch" that crossed the plank road, followed up the south bank, and in less than half an hour, to sympathetic ears, was telling his sorrowful tale, while Burton, losing no time, was hitching up the farm cart.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN PERILOUS PATHS

THE dark November days had come; the chill fog blew inland from the broad reaches of the lower Potomac and hung over many a silent pool along the Rappahannock. The leaves were stripped from the stark branches of the forest. All the rich coloring of the autumn foliage was gone. Dull and drear the barren landscape spread before the few travelers, riding the long miles of desolation through "the Wilderness"—a wilderness that in '61 was rarely mentioned fifty miles from Spottsylvania, and that in '64 was to become famous throughout the world, famous for hard, fierce, desperate fighting and an awful holocaust of helpless wounded. A winter of stern preparation had opened upon the rival armies of the North and South. Each had found the other far more formidable than either had at first believed. McClellan, with the grand Army of the Potomac to drill and discipline, dare attempt no forward move upon the Southern stronghold at Manassas Junction. Beauregard, with a victorious and enthusiastic people at his back, knew far too much of Northern tenacity to loose his war dogs on the works in front of Washington. It was the opening of the

first winter of the four years' war, and in the East, at least, the South seemed having much the best of it. In spite of its immense garrison, the national capital could be reached, reinforced, supplied only along one slender line of railway and through a most disloyal city. The Southern flag flaunted in full view of the national congress. The Southern guns had wrecked the canal and the railway bridges along the Potomac to the west, and now swept its seaward channel, their dull booming shaking the southward windows of Mount Vernon. Mirth and music, joy and triumph reigned in the old Virginia cities. Richmond was blithe and gay as Paris. In Petersburg, Lynchburg, Lexington, Charlottesville, Norfolk, even Fredericksburg, so perilously near the Potomac and possible invasion, the sounds of social gayety and the merry dance were heard in many an old colonial homestead within whose walls through long, long years no toast had been more honored in the observance than that to the President of the United States. Already the jubilant Thanksgiving chants and hymns were being practised day and night by scores of brave young gallants and beaming maids and matrons, within church walls that never before had known a service without its fervent petition to the throne of grace for blessing and guidance for that President, now derided and defied.

But in the midst of all the jubilee and triumph in the old Spottsylvania town, there had come sudden word to one little household that on the instant turned merriment to mourning. Late one October evening a messenger had

ridden into the open gateway of an antique, one-storied, red-brick house, surrounded by its white, colonnaded portico, and, dismounting at the horse-block and throwing the reins over the smooth-worn post of stone, tapped half timidly with the brazen knocker, high polished as the door knob, and gave to the gray-haired negro butler who answered a note addressed to Madame Frenier. He would not come in, he said: he preferred to remain outside. In three minutes the butler was back, agitation in his voice and manner. Madame begged that the gentleman would enter and partake of refreshments. Madame had been seeing the children to bed and would be with him directly. The messenger looked at his travel-stained boots and demurred, but the butler insisted, and ended by ushering a tall young man in riding dress into the cosey sittingroom, where logs were snapping and blazing in the open fireplace and a soft light fell on the center-table from the opaque white globe of a sperm oil lamp,—last almost of its race. Another moment and the old servitor reappeared with a gleaming decanter a slender-stemmed wine glass and a plate of biscuit on a silver tray. Then, as the visitor again demurred, he himself poured a brimming little bumper. “Madeira, suh. Been in the family longer dan I have, an’ I was Marss Major’s body suv’nt, suh, befo’ he went to West Point. Is he v’eh much huht, suh?” And the wine spattered over, so tremulous was the kind old hand.

“Arm and two ribs broken, near as we can make out,” said the messenger, briefly. “Hurt, somehow, internally is what worries us most.” And then there came the sound

of sweeping skirts in the wide hall without, and there entered, dressed in deep mourning a tall, stately, gray-haired woman, whose pallid, clearcut features, under the widow's cap, were almost the counterpart of those of the injured man. The young Virginian fairly started at the resemblance.

"It is Madame Frenier, the major's aunt," said she, extending a slender, white hand to the embarrassed youth. "I see you have seen him. His father and I were brother and sister, and, since the death of my husband, this has been my home, and I have been trying to take care of his children. Pray be seated, sir, and tell me what this dreadful news may mean. Where did this happen? We did not know he was anywhere near us."

"This morning quite early,—away out near the Gordonsville road," answered the visitor, slowly finding a seat. "His horse bolted with him into the timber and he was thrown off by low branches. They took him to Burton's, where he revived enough to dictate the note Mr. Burton sent by me, my place being over on the pike beyond Lucketts. Dr. Fowler from Chancellorsville, met me as I came past Dowdall's, but—they think he ought to have Dr. Sperry from town."

"And is he conscious now? Is he in much pain?" asked the lady, anxiety and vague disapprobation mingling in her tone.

"Conscious part of the time—in pain all of it," was the concise answer. "And now perhaps, madame, you can tell me where to find Dr. Sperry."

"James shall go with you," answered madame, self-controlled, despite her deep anxiety, and reserved in manner almost to the verge of coldness,—so at least it seemed to a young Southerner, accustomed rather to an emotional sisterhood. "May I ask you to bid Dr. Sperry come this way? I desire to send wine and comforts to him. When did you say he could be moved?"

"Not for weeks, if I am any judge," was the unpromising answer. If the major's own kindred could be so unsympathetically callous at such a time he would be as businesslike.

But at the doorway the light of understanding began to dawn upon him. Burton had told him something of the major's sorrowful dilemma:—Virginia born and bred, yet fettered by promise not to take up arms against the Union. It commanded the sympathy of this youthful husbandman. He, too, was compelled by circumstances to stick to the farm. The only son of his mother, he was her sole support, and the recruiting officer at Fredericksburg had rejected him on plea of defective eyesight. Those were the early days, be it again remembered, and long before the South had had to "rob the cradle and the grave." Possibly Burton, a long-headed man, had thought of this and counted on the active sympathy of his selected messenger. Certainly the messenger began to understand why Burton was so anxious when, at the doorway, the old darky bent his head and whispered: "Doan' let Marss Major come home, suh. Dey was fifty soldiers lookin' faw him las'

night, an' old Miss—she, she say he *cow'd*—not to fight foh his own state.”

And this it seems was true. Leaving the scenes of her own happy wifehood near Baton Rouge—a plantation found to be swamped in mortgages, Madame Frenier had come northward at Chalmers's invitation, and at the call of duty, to make her home with him and to assume charge of her nephew's children, now that their “indulgent, weak and sentimental grandmother was gone.” These were madame's descriptives, not ours. Her nephew was the only son of her only brother, and in his buoyant boyhood she had loved him well. She was a vehement Southern woman, however. She heard with amaze that he had declined the lieutenant colonelcy of Virginia cavalry, tendered him at the very outset. She raged in her heart at that “weak, silly, soulless” woman, his mother, who had died leaving him fettered and “forever disgraced and ostracized” by the promise she had exacted, and that he so weakly had given. She would do her duty by her soldier brother's grandchildren. She looked upon her nephew's serious injuries as nothing short of a judgment. There was neither love nor forgiveness with the basket she packed and sent by Dr. Sperry. There was abundant port and some Madeira. There were fowl and jelly and home-made “goodies.” There was underwear, nightwear and change of raiment, but no message beyond the conventional hope for speedy recovery. Sperry had previously found her somewhat awe-inspiring when he had prescribed for little Hugh's sore throat, and had assured the

lady, despite her theories, that neither scarlet fever, diphtheria nor tonsilitis was to be feared. He marveled that Chalmers, generally so cordial and kindly, should have so austere and forbidding an aunt. He partly understood when he found how intense and fiery a partisan she was. But neither he nor Burton's willing messenger began to know as yet that there lived a cause for her deep disapprobation far exceeding all she as yet imagined—that her nephew had met his serious injuries in the active effort to aid a prisoner to escape. Neither the doctor from the distant town, nor their neighbor of the Culpeper Pike had as yet been allowed to see or hear of the Union Trooper Ingraham. Even Burton, at first, did not know him to be such. He believed, and had reason to believe, Chalmers's avoidance of the cavalry was on his own account, for far and near these mounted gentry were inquiring for him. That they should have come to search his own home seemed to Madame Frenier only the deserved and natural consequence of his defection. That they did not pursue their search was due to the fact that she gave the word of honor of a Southern woman, loyal to the Southern cause, that he was not there and had not been there for months.

For three long weeks, suffering keenly much of the time, Chalmers lay, practically, in hiding. Burton's farm, being close to the plank road, was liable to visitation almost any moment day or night. Chalmers himself had realized that this would be no place for them. Ingraham could not hope to make his way to the Union lines without the aid of his friend, nor could Ingraham now think of

leaving him, helpless and sore stricken. By this time, too, Burton had, of course, heard why Chalmers was in such demand, and readily divined that "Mr. Worth, of Washington," was the prisoner he had aided to escape. But "Mr. Worth" by this time, too, had become an object of sympathetic interest, being a doubly escaped prisoner, as Chalmers had confided to his host—escaped from the Yankees who had court-martialed and sentenced him, and was therefore, not a man, said Chalmers, whom the South should have treated as a prisoner. Then the devotion of "Mr. Worth, of Washington," to the stricken, suffering major was another thing to win their hearts. It made a hero of our hero in Spottsylvania eyes.

In the thick woods on a little branch of Scott's Run, winding midway between the Burton and the Lockett farms, they built a cosey "shack" to which Burton and Ingraham conveyed their invalid, and there, with ample supplies, the two were left, visited occasionally by a close-mouthed doctor and by Burton himself, but undiscovered by any one else. Burton had no meats but hog and chicken, the latter tough and stringy. Chalmers craved something more delicate, and presently, with Burton's shotgun, Rex spent long hours each day prowling through the timber and the wood roads in search of "pattridge" and rabbit, meeting with more success as he gained more skill. In this way, through exercise and open air, he found his old health and strength returning, and so wandered farther every day. In three weeks time he had learned the roads and woodpaths through the Wilderness and west of Chan-

cellorsville, and knew them better than many a native, never dreaming of what use that knowledge would be to him in stirring and desperate days to come. Chalmers mended but slowly and was consumed with feverish desire to see his children, from whom there came occasional line or message, but Madame Frenier wrote only twice. She would observe her nephew's wish, she said, and profess to know nothing of his present whereabouts "unless cross-questioned by competent authority." *Then*, he must not expect his father's sister to lie. The children were not told how near to home his gallant horse had borne him before that fateful bolt. Both horses had become Ingraham's care and were picketed close to their little wood camp and were getting "logy" for lack of exercise, and Chalmers was congratulating himself that he could soon be up and doing again, and steering Ingraham across the Potomac, when a thing occurred that filled them with anxiety if not dismay.

Thanksgiving Day had come and gone. The last week of November was dying to a close, when Burton rode out one afternoon with a letter in his hand. It was from Madame Frenier, the second with which she had honored Chalmers. It contained a few loving lines from his daughter, which he read with brimming eyes, and stowed away with others in his breast; then slowly he began to read the accompanying missive. In a moment he was sitting up, his eyes ablaze. "Ingraham!" he called, and the New Yorker hastened to his side. "Read that," said Chalmers, and thrust the letter in his hand.

"My dear Nephew," it read.

"Though I cannot reconcile myself to your attitude in this, your country's hour of trial, neither can I bring myself to betraying your hiding place. Yet there is here a most persistent person who claims to be an old friend of my poor Philippe, and to have been later employed by that crack-brained Edouard. He declares he met and knew you in Washington and that he has need to see you personally and at once. He declares that he was recently at Manassas and heard from there from several sources that you had drugged a sentry and procured the escape of a prisoner. He says that while proofs against you were lacking at first, they are now complete,—that they know you have not succeeded in getting back to the North and they are now preparing search expeditions to be conducted in most systematic fashion. I give you all this for what it is worth. If true you have not a moment to lose in making your escape. As duty demands I shall remain here to take care of your poor children."

Chalmers set his fine white teeth. "She's right in one thing, Ingraham," said he. "Weak as I am, we must get out of this. Now, perhaps, you see how I came to be thrown with young Frenier, and he with that blackguard Blunt."

That night they lifted Chalmers into saddle, Rex riding the spirited bay, Chalmers the more quiet animal. A handsome reward was that he left in the hands of Burton's better and wiser half, for the Virginian would not take a cent. Then, in the darkness and silence of the wintry woods, with a leading rein from Chalmers's bit, Rex turned his charger's head southwestward, took the plank road for ten minutes, then plunged boldly into the south-

ward copse, following a winding game trail as much as a mile, emerging at a well-defined country road running east again through the timber, and this he followed mile after mile of a tangle of second growth, sometimes crossing cart tracks, sometimes emerging a few minutes in little clearings. Once they passed a furnace where fires were glowing, but what men there were about it were wrapped in slumber. Close to it they forded a little stream, and then, following the general line of an unfinished railway, they left the settlements about Chancellorsville well to the north, those about Spottsylvania to their right hand, and bore away eastward toward Fredericksburg. Two hours before dawn they stopped at a farm house whose startled occupants gave eager welcome at sound of Chalmers's voice. Here they fed their horses, had hot coffee, and, with a mule-bestrident ducky for a guide, pushed on again, and were in hiding in the woods on the south bank of the Rappahannock, with Fredericksburg far behind them, before the red eye of the morning burst through the veil of mist and proclaimed the coming of another and, they hoped, a better day.

That afternoon their ducky Mercuries were back with answer and assurance. That evening a boat slipped softly over the Rappahannock to the King George side, two horses fording and swimming behind. That night they rode again until the broad bosom of the Potomac in spangled radiance gleamed between them and the low-lying, invisible Maryland shores. Another ducky had galloped ahead, and negro boatmen hailed them as they came, and

here and now it was "Good-bye to Dobbin," for the gallant horses could be led no further. They were to be sent in good season back to Burton's farm. The night was frosty, yet not too sharply cold. The oars of the fishing shallop had been securely muffled. Noiselessly from a little inlet they paddled forth among the mist wreaths rising from the lapping waters. Far to the northward dim riding lights revealed the position of a gunboat, one of Uncle Sam's, supporting others farther up stream, but tempting not too strenuously the Southern gunners at Mathias Point.

Northward the sable oarsmen tugged their way, watching eagerly, breathlessly the while for scouting crews from either shore. Luck was with them at last. An hour's pull against the ebbing tide, and the black hull of the sturdy Sachem, with its slender spars, its smoked-wreathed funnel and the ugly thirty-pounder on the forecastle loomed between them and the paling stars. The challenge of the marine sentry rang across the placid water. "Aye, aye, sir!" shouted Chalmers, in reply, and presently, stiff and chilled, but grateful inexpressibly, they were half hauled, half lifted up the ladder and into the presence of the wondering officer-of-the-deck. With military salute, Chalmers stood heel to heel and reported:—

"Trooper R. Ingraham, U. S. Cavalry, escaped from the Confederate lines, and Mr. Hugh Chalmers, civilian, of Fredericksburg, Virginia," then toppled forward, faint and exhausted, and, but for Ingraham, would have laid his length upon the oaken planks. Two seamen helped

to raise him. The little brandy flask came into requisition again. The officer on duty seemed more than concerned. He personally aided in making Chalmers comfortable in his own snug bunk below ; then, as the dawn came stealing into the skies above the eastern shore, turned with eyes of interest and curiosity on Ingraham.

“ We had your friend Blunt aboard three days ago and heard all about you and the major. Odd genius that fellow Blunt,—put him ashore almost under their guns up there at Mathias. Some of your own regiment brought him down here. You can see their campfires now,” he continued, pointing with a gold-striped arm toward the dim Maryland shore ; then, turning with a grin, half of sympathy, half amusement, continued, “ We’ve been ordered to watch out for you two as much as a month. They didn’t set you to lugging a log after all, did they ? ”

“ I don’t understand,” said Rex, though light was dawning.

“ Why, that court, being all regulars, gave you a stiff sentence for riding down a volunteer sentry—three months’ stoppages, confinement and toting a log in front of the guard. But it would never have been enforced, Blunt said.”

“ Why not ? ” asked Rex.

“ Some of the court signed a paper and it got to the President.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE LEAP OF A YEAR

THANKSGIVING, '62, a twelvemonth later, and many a sorrowful turn had come in the tide of the affairs of men with whom our story has most to do. The seat of war had shifted, first from the upper Potomac to the Peninsula, then back again to Manassas Plains, then up to the Antietam and now, down to the lower Rappahannock dense columns of blue and gray were hastening to face each other in battle lines along the heights that sheltered Fredericksburg. Sorrowful days had come for Chalmers. The old home lay in ashes, fired by hostile hands long weeks before the coming of the Union blue. The old servants were scattered. The old name had been dragged in the dust—another judgment, said Madame Frenier. Chalmers himself, a broken man in health and spirits, with but the remnant of his once ample fortune, had been banished by physicians' order to Havana, accompanied by his children and their dutiful, but not too sympathetic grandaunt. John Winn, sturdy soldier that he was, had found in his first year as a field officer far more of mortification and of the bitterness of defeat than he could find compensation for in promotion to the

lieutenant colonelcy. Stonewall Jackson had tricked Winn's generals in the Valley, again at Cedar Mountain, again at Second Bull Run, and had hurled their forces back with loss appalling on the bloody field of Sharpsburg. A new, reluctant leader had replaced the "Little Mac" beloved of the soldiery if not of Fate. A bloodier battle still was promised here along the wintry hillsides, and John Winn wondered if the God of War could ever be induced to smile upon the Army of the Potomac, so persistent had been his frown.

Of Blunt, the versatile, and of Edouard Frenier, his erstwhile employer, nothing had been seen north of the Potomac since the second coming of Chalmers to Washington. There were officers on duty in the War Department who, in old dragoon days and in the Mexican war, had known the major well—officers who, after his resignation, and especially since the outbreak of the war, had kept in partial touch with him. They knew the value of his word, and when he was brought to the capital after that strange, eventful mission in Virginia, so many of Blunt's claims and stories were proved to be false that guileless officials, hitherto misled by them, were at last convinced of his double dealing, and therefore ordered his arrest wherever found. Blunt learned it within the week—and the Southern lines. He knew he stood unmasked and could hope no further favors at the hands of a war secretary, dazzled for the time by his "revelations" as to Southern measures and to Southern men. Blunt now dare venture nowhere northward, and even in the South

some eyes were partly opened, for he and Frenier had parted company. Blunt had lost caste with both sections.

Even at Brookside, too, the shadow of despond had fallen. Dallas, stanch friend and kinsman had been sent to a wider, greater field, where his talents and ability were winning recognition under a commander who, despite objectionable qualities, at least knew merit when he saw it, and stinted not his reward. Dallas had gone to New Orleans, leaving sore and anxious hearts behind him. Agatha Langdon had been drooping visibly ever since the startling episode of that September visitation. Alice had been half-hearted, only, in her sympathy and ministrations, and Mrs. Langdon, troubled that they should be troubled,—troubled, too, that she and Dallas should have so misjudged that chivalrous Southerner, Chalmers,—troubled that she could no longer keep a motherly eye on young Ned Frenier, now said to have joined the Southern army,—troubled sorely that reverse after reverse had befallen the arms of her beloved country, had now grave reason to be troubled on her own account. This, too, when there was no devoted brother and skilled physician, both in one, close at hand to reassure and comfort. One glimpse they had had of stanch John Winn as the army tramped through Washington on its march to tackle Lee in Maryland. He rode in for an hour, grave, considerate, sympathetic and saying not another word of that which the year before lay nearest his heart—that which, though they could not know it, lay there unrequited still. He asked for news of Ingraham, who for long days had been again the

object of their tenderest care and devotion, but once more was riding with his squadron, and so for Ingraham the new lieutenant colonel asked in vain. Winn wondered why, concerning Rex, they were so reserved, indeed so silent—why at mention of his name the eyes of Alice were averted.

A strange year had this been to Ingraham since the morn when, landed by the Sachem's boat, still in civilian dress, he reported himself and his benefactor to the young cavalry commander as the troop was saddling for the march. They were sent on by easy stages, Chalmers being far too feeble to stand much travel. They were taken to the War Department the morning of their arrival in Washington, and there a classmate of the major's gave them cordial welcome, and there they were questioned by the war secretary himself. Chalmers asked that he might be excused from giving information of any kind, he being a Virginian as well as a non-combatant, and Mr. Cameron could not insist; but Ingraham's narrative was taken down, and, so far from being sent to join his troop, he was bidden to remain with Major Chalmers for whom most comfortable quarters had been found and who stood much in need of rest and professional care. Both were afforded him at once. Then, later, old friends and comrades flocked to see him, and at such times Ingraham would have slipped from the room, but it seemed to delight Chalmers to present his comrade as "The log-carrier of the —th Cavalry" to generals and field officers, one of whom was Major Wallis, and Wallis knew him instantly and gave him

heartly welcome and did himself no good by declaring, in presence of other officers, the sentence of the court absurd. "You know we cannot 'disclose or discover the vote or opinion of any particular member,'" said he, "or there would be a pretty tale to tell." But in spite of Wallis's most injudicious declaration, the War Department was pleased to consider that the ends of justice had been sufficiently met in the publication of that sentence. Further than the fine, at least, it was never carried into effect. Perhaps it was never intended that it should be. The week following Ingraham's arrival he was surprised by the receipt of a ten days' furlough with permission to visit the city of New York. He had money enough for the purpose. Chalmers was in excellent hands, and so without first going to pay his respects at Brookside, our trooper took the night train and, with the morrow's dawn, was tramping up to the Astor House for breakfast. The lawyers' offices were away down town, and the men he most needed to see were Watson and Ned Burnham.

The first named was eagerly waiting and seemed rejoiced to welcome him—a telegram had been sent from Washington the day before. Together they went to the St. Nicholas where Burnham had been rooming, the Raynor homestead having already passed to other hands. Mr. Burnham had left quite suddenly, said the clerk, three days before. He had gone to the Hudson River Railway station and probably to Montreal. Watson was even more incensed than Rex. "He has been here three weeks, with a power of attorney from Mrs. Fairbanks, who has some

little money of her own, and to my surprise and discomfiture, another from Raynor himself ; this, too, in spite of my long connection with Raynor's affairs. It simply shows how weak Raynor's judgment must have grown, or how strong Burnham's influence. He has signed papers for Raynor and made collections for both, and was to have given me an accounting this morning,—his own proposition,—and now he's off. He must have heard of your escape and possibly got wind of your coming."

To Watson Rex confided Chalmers's letter repudiating one telegram and denying the statements of the other. From Watson he received but little news of the absent ones. Raynor had regained in part the use of his voice, but one arm and leg were practically worthless. He was a wreck for so much of life as might be left him, but was able to spend hours in the sunshine and the soft sea air, and with Editha to minister to him was dreamily content,—oblivious, possibly of his changed financial condition. Editha, said Watson, had written time and again to urge him, as their lawyer, to raise money on her "expectations." But, she was yet a legal "infant." Her mother's bequest had been placed in the hands of a trust company that could pay out nothing until she came of age. Mrs. Fairbanks it was who advanced the money for the family needs, even keeping up the rather liberal allowance Mr. Raynor had accorded Burnham, but she "held the purse-strings" and Editha chafed at her restrictions. Watson believed that, beyond her anxieties on her father's account, Miss Raynor was far from happy, and now, doubtless, that black sheep

Burnham would be again in close attendance and there was no telling what might result from such a combination of remoteness and proximity. Could Ingraham tell him anything about those people—the Malloys—who claimed that Burnham was indebted to them in a large sum? Watson said he had been bothered very much of late by an elderly Irish-woman and a truculent young Irishman. Rosie he had rarely seen. It seems that they had been shadowing the old house on Waverly Place while the books and furniture were being taken away, and so had seen Watson and ferreted out his business connection with the household, then swooped upon him with their combined demands.

Even then Rex was loath to tell of Burnham's relations with that poor girl and his own annoyances and entanglements resulting therefrom, but Watson had his reasons, he said, for asking and went into a fume of wrath when the truth was told. Rex ought to lose no time in going to Nassau, said he, and denouncing Burnham to his face, and in the presence of, at least, John Raynor and his sister.

"Uncle Sam might raise objections," was Rex's quiet answer. "You forget I am still a mere trooper, and one does not go voyaging on trooper pay." That reminded Watson that there were several hundred dollars subject to Ingraham's order which he ought to draw.

"There was barely a hundred due when Mr. Raynor was stricken," said Rex. "How can this be?"

"Set aside by Mr. Raynor's previous order," answered

Watson bluntly, for he dreaded cross-questions, "And in spite of Mrs. Fairbanks."

"Then cover it back into the treasury," said Rex, "I'll none of it," and he told the lawyer of that lady's letter to Major Winn. They parted with warm handshake, and two days later Rex was again by Chalmers's side. Something had happened during his brief absence. He could see it at a glance. That night the major told him. The mistress of Brookside had written, briefly, but sympathetically. Both her brother and herself had wronged him in thought and word, and she wished to express her deep regret. As matters stood it was best, perhaps, that there should be no meeting, but she felt it due to him and due to them that she should say that they acquitted him of that which they had so long harbored against him. She begged his pardon and wished him happier days.

Then there was a letter for Ingraham, bidding him come to them before he returned to duty. Rex went, all sympathy and gentleness, and was concerned to see how pallid and how changed looked both Agatha and her mother—how nervous and ill at ease seemed Alice. He avoided, as did they, all but conventional and courteous mention of the major. They had a prolific topic in the announcement that he himself had again been tendered a lieutenancy in the regular service and had again declined. "Just as soon—as—as I can properly leave my friend I shall go to my troop," said he, "and then," with an attempt at gaiety, "you will again hear for the fiftieth time that at last the backbone of this wicked rebellion is broken."

Sooner than he thought for the parting was decreed. Christmas tide was barely over when there came to Chalmers the cruel news that his children were without a roof to shelter them—that only blackened walls remained of what had been so cosy and so dear a home; that Madame Frenier with her charges and such property as they had managed to save, had been landed opposite Acquia Creek, and thither he was summoned to meet them. Another week and Rex Ingraham, in blue overcoat and top boots, was tramping sentry post about a muddy but most soldierly command. It was many and many a moon before he saw Hugh Chalmers again.

But, before he went, Chalmers again besought a favor on Ingraham's account. The troop with which he had served so short a time had been sent to Carlisle as a sort of depot nucleus for a cavalry recruit station. Its rolls had borne him as absent in hospital,—absent in confinement awaiting trial,—absent, prisoner of war, etc., with stoppages against him upon the payroll. A brand new regiment of regulars was camped east of the capitol, led by officers who knew and loved their trade, and filled with enthusiastic young horsemen. "Transfer him. Give him a fresh start with the right kind of association," said Chalmers, and the transfer was announced in orders from the War Department on the spot.

At Arlington was camped the big Western brigade Rex had known at Kalorama, and Carden had been to look him up and tender him his general's influence and best wishes. Rex thanked him, smiled and said the paths of glory pur-

sued in the train of general officers seemed, in his case, to lead but to the grave predicament of arrest and court-martial. He meant to cultivate the currycomb and brush, the buff stick and button board, with no higher ambition at the moment than corporal's chevrons and his captain's approbation. He had found a most congenial "bunky" in a tall young farmer from Ohio who knew more about horses than the oldest troop sergeant. He, too, had enlisted in the regulars because he wished to learn the business from the bottom up, and, recruit though he was, they had set him weeks before to teaching other recruits to ride. He was a quiet, humorous, philosophical fellow, with keen, deep-set blue eyes and sandy hair and no superfluous flesh, and a chin that physiognomists said meant fight. He and Rex had taken to each other from the start, for the Buckeye found the young Columbiad could ride and knew a lot beside. They became tentmates and close companions and even intimates through the long, dull winter that followed. There was no surprise and little adverse comment when, in regimental orders issued just before the famous break-up in March and the onward dash at the Quaker guns about Manassas, the farm boy was announced as sergeant and the Columbiad as corporal in "K" Troop. Another month, and, clearing the way for a big division, the command of their general of Kalorama days, they were trotting into view of the spires of Fredericksburg and mounting guard over headquarters at the Lacy House.

By this time spring was far advanced and Chalmers far

away, but Ingraham, with his trooper chum, in their explorations about the quaint old Spottsylvania town came upon some interesting neighbors of the Chalmers' household—people who showed them the mournful ruins and certain bits of bric a brac and furniture rescued from the flames. In one old desk, half burned, had been found the miniature of a beautiful woman. Rex had not money enough to buy it, but he went straightway to Captain Carden and Carden to the holder. Within another day the half ruined desk, with its possibly precious contents, had been placed before the general of division, who studied the portrait with earnest eyes. It was a face not soon to be forgotten, one to be recognized at a glance even if met at the antipodes, and the general's memory for faces was proverbial.

But desk and contents were boxed and sent to Washington, and then their troop was hurried, horses and all, by transport from Alexandria to the Peninsula, and they were foremost in the pursuit when, at last, the lines of Yorktown were abandoned. They did much advance guard duty in the week that followed and heard much uproar in the gradual move toward Richmond. And then, one sweltering day when the army was straddling the Chickahominy, "Old Jack," who had been skipping about the Shenandoah just a week before, swooped down unlooked for on our exposed right flank and crushed the Fifth Corps out near Gaines's Mill.

Bearer of a despatch in the late June afternoon, Cor-

poral Ingraham had galloped much of the way from McClellan's headquarters to the Woodbury Bridge; had thence, with difficulty, forced a passage through the swarm of skulkers, stragglers and slightly wounded drifting to the rear; had wondered as he reached the smoke-shrouded plateau, with all its ghastly debris of furious battle, whether another court-martial awaited him for riding down some obstructive sentry, and then, dismissed without instructions of any kind by an anxious-eyed general, who only hurriedly glanced over the paper and tossed it to an aide, Rex found himself a few minutes later on the flank of a squadron whose sabres had just flashed from their sheaths to the shoulder, with the trumpet sounding "Forward." Other squadrons were close columned in the rear. Officers, bending low in saddle and peering through the drifting smoke, were seeking safe passage among a straggling line of splintered caissons and groups of frantic, furiously struggling horses, maimed and torn by shot and shell. The fluttering guidon to his left bore the legend in gold "5 U. S."—a rival yet a comrade regiment, and he read the indications at a glance. They were about to charge. Out flew his own blade on the instant. A second or two he gave to setting the sword-knot tight to the gauntlet wrist, his snorting charger tugging madly at the bit the while. "Trot" sang the trumpet somewhere in the smoke fog, and the scabbards clanked and jangled, and horses fumed and plunged and curvetted and men swore savagely between their set teeth at crowding ranks and crushing knees. Stern voices, fronting the sec-



"WITH ONE MADDENING, JOYOUS, VENGEFUL CHEER"

ond line, damned all eagerness and bade the riders "touch boot to the left and dress." The foam came flying from the bits. The trot became a plunging lope before they had fairly cleared the crippled guns, and then, out from the curtaining wreath of sulphur smoke they burst upon the field, and there, fierce volleying, scant three hundred yards away, tipped by the blood red battle flags, screaming, screeching, yelling in demoniac triumph, but compact, aligned and in disciplined rank and order despite the storm of yells, there swept upon the plain the stanch gray battalions of Longstreet's fine division, five thousand strong at the right of the Southern line. And at them, straight to the teeth, rode the little squadrons of the Fifth. Too late now to swerve in face of such appalling odds, to wheel about and dart again within the obscuring veil. Too brave and proud were they to risk those volleys in the back. Better, far better meet the death inevitable, with blades upraised, with daring, dauntless crest and charging battlecry. "Gallop" rang the trumpets again, in answer to the leader's signal; then, almost instantly, "Charge!" came the exultant peal, and with one maddening, joyous, vengeful cheer, the devoted handful, this modern Sacred Band of soldier song and story, drove in to their glorious sacrifice, spurring in the lead of Chambliss twice pierced already by hissing lead, Rex Ingraham with them on the outer flank.

That was the last he really knew for days. They dragged him out from under a dying horse, an Enfield bullet hole in his left shoulder, a deep gash on his fore-

head. His own steed had gone down in front of the Second South Carolina,—a Southern staff officer with him, transfixed by Ingraham's sabre. Some one had helped him on another horse and started him with the backward rush for the Union lines. Some one had lifted him into an ambulance that tossed and jolted him to a transport. He never seemed to know or care what had happened or where he was until he slowly crept again to life and consciousness to find himself lying in a little white bed in a cool, darkened room, that he vaguely knew he must have seen before, and all this was he now recalling as, once more in front of Petersburg, he saw Thanksgiving Day again.

CHAPTER XX

AN OMINOUS DAY

IT was early in July when they brought Rex Ingraham to Washington. His shoulder wound healed rapidly. His forehead would bear to the end the scar of that Southern blade. He was able by early August to sit, surrounded by a little group of fair women, a patrician mother and two daughters to whom the active care and nursing of this trooper patient had come almost as a God-send. It took them out of themselves, out of their own cares and secret sorrow. It was Major Wallis who sent them word of Ingraham's plight, and it was the turning of the tide in Ingraham's luck that, instead of being landed with the great bulk of the wounded at Newport News and Old Point Comfort, his transport,—one of the first to leave with the earliest sufferers of the seven days' battles,—had steamed away to Washington and unloaded at the old arsenal. Mrs. Langdon had little trouble in getting the order of the surgeon general for a transfer from hospital to her home. It was not a month before that over-worked official was heard to say he wished there were thousands to follow her lead. They took the best of care of Rex in many a way—nursed, fed, coddled, comforted,

read to and wrote for him; especially did Mrs. Langdon and Agatha. It dawned upon him before very many days that, while these two were often alone with him, reading, writing, and later playing backgammon, chess or cribbage, Alice Langdon left such duties to her elders except when there was every likelihood that those elders would not be called from the room. It set him to thinking, and in the perversity of his kind, to planning and seeking other results. It piqued his curiosity, possibly his vanity, and it bore its inevitable result. Alice Langdon was neither brilliant nor learned. She had beauty, rare beauty of form and feature. She was a sweet, wholesome, home-loving girl, somewhat indulged and petted, but by no means spoiled. The impassioned wooing of her Creole suitor had won no response. The story John Winn had told of the neglect and treachery which had rewarded Ingraham's devotion to the girl he loved, and the friend he protected, had kindled in her gentle heart a flame of pity,—compassion,—sympathy that became intensified as she studied him, covertly and shyly, day by day, and pity in itself, we know, is close kin to an overwhelming passion. It was not her doing—but who can say it was not her wish?—that Rex Ingraham should be brought again within their doors, this time to be the object of lavish devotion on part of her mother and Agatha,—to be in secret the object of a hero worship that was the outpouring of a tender, glowing and most enthusiastic nature. Wallis and other officers had, perhaps unwittingly, magnified the trooper's deeds in that desperate charge, and now, in the eyes of Alice Langdon,

more daring and heroism and soldier prowess were embodied in this *beau sabreur* from the shades of Columbia and the ranks of the regulars than could be found beneath all the silver stars in the Army of the Potomac. His warrant as sergeant had come and, with it, a capital letter from the lieutenant colonel commanding, telling him the whole regiment hoped for his promotion to a commission, and Rex held it forth for her to read before showing it to others. The days of his convalescence were growing dangerously sweet to him, as Lee, Longstreet and Jackson, steadily driving the Union lines from Cedar Mountain to the Rappahannock, thence to Manassas, thence to Chantilly and Fairfax but a few short miles away, were coming dangerously near. He was up now and wandering excitedly about the house, craving news, neglecting nourishment, and Alice watched him with wordless apprehension—her mother and sister with mingled relief and dread, for of late he had begun to show constant desire for her presence, and now it was high time to think of his prospects, which oddly enough, had until lately entered little into the problem. Then came the dread tidings that Philip Kearny and Isaac Stevens, two of the bravest of our generals, had died battling almost at our gates—that Lee was leaping for the fords of the Potomac, and that Stuart's gray horsemen were already scouting its rocky shores. A young officer brought the news that the President had again called on McClellan to head the army and to stem the tide of invasion. He said he must ride that night to join the advance at Rockville on the Frederick Pike, and

that afternoon Rex Ingraham was gone two hours. "I am going, too," was all he could say when, just before sunset, he returned. He had planned it all, after consultation with the men of a field battery, halting to replenish ammunition chests and to shoe their horses before setting forth again. He could go with them to the front and his regiment would be there.

Very possibly it was purposely arranged that, in saying adieu, there should be no opportunity for a word with Alice alone. Very possibly, too, that was not Agatha Langdon's doing, but that of her now alarmed and anxious mother. At all events, such parting words as could be said,—such hurried but heartfelt words of thanks and blessing as he could stammer, for his heart was full indeed, were addressed collectively to the three, but it was her little hand that lingered helpless in his clasp and last of all. It was cold as snow and tremulous as aspen. The instant he was gone she turned and almost tottered to her room, nor would she open at her mother's call. Poor John Winn, indeed!

Exasperating were the confusion and delay about the capital in that woebegone September. One of the most energetic gunners in the regular service, past master in battery drill and blasphemy, had spent hours of the day and much of his vocabulary in the effort to get horseshoes. It was eight p. m. before they reached his fretful camp. It would be midnight now before they could march, and Rex Ingraham borrowed the horse of a brother sergeant, rode back to Brookside, tethered his mount in the lane,

and as once before and at even a later hour, sought the little summerhouse. A year earlier the thought of that other girl, even in her cruel neglect of him, would have stayed his steps. A month earlier and still he would have resisted what was becoming a strong temptation ; but now, the thought of the last look of those swimming eyes, the last flutter of her cold little hand in his lingering clasp, overthrew all consideration of his impossible condition. He had neither rank, fortune, position nor a man's heart-whole, undivided, fervent love to offer her. Prudence, justice, honor even, were arrayed against his going, and yet his whole nature seemed to urge it because, whether it were best, it would at least be sweet and precious to her, and the time had come when he thought the memory of Editha Raynor was dying out of his life—when the assurance of the love of so gentle, so lovely a girl as Alice Langdon would banish it—entirely.

And she was there in the old arbor, in the dim light of the waning moon, her head pillowed on the arm that rested on the little rustic table, her white hand buried in Blondo's shaggy fur. Even her watch dog looked up and bade him joyous welcome, whereat her head, too, was uplifted, and she saw him standing in the doorway, and knew that it was for her that he had come again. One stride and he had reached her side. One word and he had seized her unresisting hands. One moment only could he hold them, for in a passion of uncontrollable love, shame, sorrow, confusion,—all intermingled, she tore them from him,

buried her bonny face in her arms and burst into a storm of tears. What was there left for him to do?

Less than half an hour later, her weeping stilled, though every little while a great sob welled up from her breast, she sat encircled by his arm, her wet cheek pillowed on his shoulder. And now they were calling her from the house. "I knew it would be so," she whispered, and then, for the first time, raised her lips to his.

"Then it is good-bye," he murmured, "but *now* I shall ask for that commission. Now I have something to strive for, and whatever honor or fortune I may win I shall bring it straight to you. God in heaven bless and keep you,—Alice!"

That was early in September, and now Thanksgiving had come and gone in the cavalry camps, and there had been no Sergeant Ingraham to share the brief soldier festivity. The commission had come—a captaincy in the New York Light Cavalry, for the story of the charge had gone to Albany, backed by many an influential name, and stirred the pulses of a moribund administration. Her fighting men being mainly at the front, the Empire State had fallen into the hands of an array of foreign-born citizens of her metropolis and their political sympathizers throughout the commonwealth. That commission was not conferred without vigorous kick and clawing on the part of the terrible "Tiger," once more dominating Manhattan, but the governor stood to his guns and young Captain Ingraham, fresh from months with the regulars, went circling the Confederate camps, ripping up railway tracks,

burning supply trains, cutting off stragglers, chasing or being chased by detachments of gray horsemen, and so, heard only at long intervals from the girl he had left, consoled and comforted, even in the prospect of their separation, under the eaves of Brookside. He saw nothing, and was thankful, of the awful, the senseless, sacrifice of thousands of gallant men in the misdirected storm of the Southern lines at Fredericksburg. He saw much of Virginia, the rivers, roads and railways toward Richmond. He saw again, under their soft mantlet of snow, the woods and clearings about Chancellor's, and the general commanding the cavalry marveled much at his knowledge of that neighborhood and called for explanation. "You should be at headquarters—on the staff," said he, but here his colonel interposed. "Few of the troop commanders," he said, "have enjoyed the advantages of Captain Ingraham, who has learned cavalry duty in the regulars. So we cannot spare him from the regiment yet awhile." From having regarded him with aversion and disfavor at the start, Troop "C" had begun to swear that they had the best captain in the "Harris Light." All the same the episode was not forgotten. Kilpatrick bragged to Averill, to Gregg and Buford, when those typical cavalrymen stepped up higher with Hooker's assignment to the command of the great, magnanimous, long-suffering, yet never really beaten army. And so it happened that, when the leaves at last began to sprout again and the cavalry was sent to feel the way through the fords afar up stream, pioneering the army in that masterly move around the

Southern left and into the heart of the Wilderness, Rex Ingraham rode much of the time at the side of a young dragoon leader just given his first star, and now commanding the advance. Then, that duty finished and his own regiment being far on the Richmond raid, he was given permission to look up certain farm folk in the neighborhood of Dowdall's, and, on the afternoon of the second of May—that rather too restful Saturday, as things resulted—in the quest for old acquaintances among the natives found himself lost, practically, among comparative strangers, along the campfires and stacked arms of Steinwehr's Division of the Eleventh Corps.

But here was Dowdall's tavern, its shaded porch well filled with general, staff and field officers, its former *habitués* nowhere to be seen. Across the turnpike, between them and the old church, a field battery had unhitched and its horses were feeding from their nose bags at the guns. Farther over at the eastward edge of the clearing the batteries of the reserve were parked in compact order, for the wood beyond was thick, and room was scarce. Officers and men of the nearest command seemed mainly Germans, and in the best of spirits. The story was going round that Lee and Jackson, dismayed by Hooker's coming in such force, were already breaking away along the front, in full retreat for Gordonsville; that Longstreet, with two strong divisions, was far beyond Richmond; that at last the Army of the Potomac had gained firm foothold south of that modern military Rubicon—the Rappahannock—and would now sweep on in

triumph to the James. Rex was hungry for something more substantial than rumors, and, mindful of Mother Burton's capital fare, rode on through the chatting, jostling, good humored groups along the pike; turned southwestward at the forks, passing the stacks of the 119th New York, and bringing up five minutes later at the crossing of the Run and the behest of the officer in command of the pickets. Here, by the side of the plank road, the supports were sprawling, while the reserve was half way back toward the regiment. The extreme outermost sentries—the so-called pickets—were crouching in the bushes barely two hundred yards farther. There lay the long streak of the plank road. There, hardly half a mile away, stood Burton's little homestead, but, "Stuart's cavalry fellows are all around there now," said his informant. "You'd be ridin' straight to hell, or Libby, if you went another rod." And Rex well knew that that was but a soldier euphemism for "Halt, or we fire!"

"I knew the people living in that house a year ago last winter," said he, stroking his charger's arching neck, "and I should have been glad to be of service to them now."

The officer of the picket studied him curiously. "I didn't know we had any cavalry down this way last winter," said he. "You belong to the 'Harris Light,' don't you?"

"Yes, but I'm on staff duty just now with General Averill. I rode over from the river an hour or so ago with a message to General Hooker. Then got permission to come out here."

The officer turned and stared uneasily out along the plank road. East, south and west,—all but that little cleared patch on the rise at Burton's, the woods were thick and shut off the view, but far down that narrowing groove to the southwest, perhaps two miles away, a dull, dun-colored cloud seemed rising above the treetops, and thither the officer pointed with no uncertain hand.

"Does Fighting Joe know about that, d'ye think?" he asked of Ingraham. "Down the Run here, two miles southeast at Hazel Grove, where the Twelfth Corps are close to the reb lines, they've been counting them marching to the west ever since sun-up—see 'em *plain*. What d'they say at headquarters?"

But already,—a strange, anxious look in his eyes,—Ingraham was dismounting. "They say," said he, "that Lee's whole army is making off for Gordonsville, but—hold on a bit." And now he had tossed his reins to a listening soldier, and unslinging his field-glass was crouching forward toward a little stump where knelt a sentry by the roadside. Another moment and he, too, was kneeling and gazing southwestward down the road.

Half a dozen troopers, gray clad, could be distinctly seen flitting about the Burton farm. Half a dozen officers, following a slouching figure on a raw-boned sorrel, as Rex could make out through his binocular, were just riding away. Half a dozen dim gray figures further along, men and horses both, were faintly visible further in on that wood-bordered lane, and beyond them and about them stood what looked like a rank of cavalry drawn up across

the way. "Fitz Lee's fellows," muttered the officer, creeping to his side. "We nabbed one of them an hour or so ago, a lieutenant scouting on his own hook. General Devens was out here and he took him back to the Pike. He said they were all moseying off to the west."

"He did, did he?" cried Ingraham, rising suddenly and in excitement uncontrollable. "Look *you* then and tell me what *you* see. This plank road runs west of south. That dust cloud means a dense column is crossing it, not two miles from here, and that column is no more going to Gordonsville than I am to dinner. It's heading straight north for Lucketts' farm, opposite our right flank. I know every road within five miles, and I'll swear to it. How long did you say they've been crossing?" He was again in saddle, even his horse, now, quivering in every muscle.

"Ever since ten or eleven o'clock, anyhow," was the eager answer.

"Then, by heaven, it means a flank attack!" cried Rex. "Where'll I find General Devens?"

"Right back there on the Pike, 'cross that clear field to the north. Better follow the Run for a few rods," shouted the officer, as Rex turned and dove into the timber north of the road. In ten minutes he was in front of a double line of stacked arms and sprawling battalions along the main road—Ohio men he saw by the gold legend on their colors. "Where's your general?" he demanded, striving hard to be calm. "Where's General Devens?" came the sharp demand from an officer, swiftly riding up from the west. Rex knew the voice at the instant. "Good God,

Winn, but I'm glad to see you!" he cried. "Think what I've seen!"

"Think what *I*'ve seen!" echoed the ringing tones. "Where's General Devens, I say."

"This way, Colonel," came an answering voice, and a tall, heavily-bearded, massive soldier in the uniform of a brigadier general, turned in saddle and beckoned them on. "These gentlemen have need to see you, sir," he continued, in manner grave and restrained, and another general officer, seated on a stack of ammunition boxes, glanced up from the despatch he was writing and impatiently demanded, "Well, what is it?"

CHAPTER XXI

THE WRECK OF THE RIGHT WING

THERE had been time for only a brief hand clasp between the two friends. Winn was the first to answer the demand. Springing from his horse, he stood respectfully before the division chief—a new leader who had come but the week before to supersede the soldier the whole corps had known and honored for over a year—the soldier who had stepped back without a murmur to the subordinate rôle of a brigade commander. Worse luck, the new acquisition had been taken from a rival corps and set above men he had been taught to regard with distrust,—men whom he had been bidden to “brace up.” Fighting Joe, head of the army, had spoken disdainfully of Sigel’s old men. Sigel, the idol of the foreign element in the corps, and the friend of all of it, had asked his release barely a fortnight before, and Howard, a man they knew not at all, had prayerfully accepted his place. Promotion had started in all the other corps, consequent upon the advancement of Hooker, but not so in the Eleventh. Its new leader, one of its three division, and one of its brigade, commanders had been suddenly set over them from without, and their own generals had been humbled.

It hurt the morale of the men even more than it hurt the unseated officers. And now, at the moment when the grand array of six corps stood halted among the woods, headquarters and the center at Chancellors, it was the luck of the Eleventh, under its new leaders, to be flung out on the extreme right flank—Devens's division farthest out of all.

Into the presence of this new commander, escorted by his predecessor and now senior subordinate, McLean, of Ohio, came these two officers, American by birth, loyalists to the core and New Yorkers by commission—men of intelligence and education, as any man could see, but harbingers of ill, if looks could be relied upon, and the new general for nearly an hour past had been harrassed and bombarded by reports he did not wish to believe. Von Gilsa, commanding his outermost brigade, had thrice by three o'clock sent word that the rebels were certainly working round to his right and rear ;—that a dash of gray troopers had driven in his outposts along the Pike ;—that the Luckett farm was filled with Confederate infantry, a symptom far more significant. Then a light battery had been sighted from the tree-tops, coming into the pike from the south and then eastward toward Luckett's, where it was lost to view in the trees. The stories had angered Devens. Hooker had sent word that the Eleventh Corps should be entrenched, because, " We have good reason to suppose the enemy is moving to our right." Moreover, in the same missive, dated 9:30 of this hot, sunshiny May morning, Hooker bade Howard :—" Please advance your

pickets in order to obtain timely information of their approach," but Howard, when it came, was resting, very tired, at Dowdall's. Schurz, it was, who received the despatch and read it to his new corps commander. He even ventured to tender a bit of advice, but not one word of warning did the right division get from superior headquarters, and, in the absence of tidings from his chief, Devens saw fit to look with suspicion and disapprobation on the reports of his subordinates. Here, he argued, was one of these nervous, excitable, exaggerative, foreign-schooled colonels sending frequent word that the rebels were massing opposite his exposed flank. It gave him, as did other reports, such annoyance that even when two thoroughbred Yankees, Ohio colonels who had fought Stonewall Jackson time and again, came later to him with McLean, he would not believe, but sent them rebuked and humiliated back to their lines. And now, when it was barely three, here stood two of the earlier croakers, as he reasoned, and his sombre face was frowning, his manner was austerity itself as he looked up, angering, at Winn, and demanded: "Well, what is it?"

"I have been out into the woods to the west, General, half a mile beyond our flanks," said Winn, respectfully but sturdily. "I have seen infantry in solid columns filing northward. I counted the colors of six regiments and more were following. I saw guns on the pike and I believe they are forming for attack. Colonel von Gilsa heard my report and ordered me to ride at once to you."

"I've had nothing but rumors of the enemy's coming

from *your* flank, and assurances of his going from the other," said Devens, petulant and annoyed. "And you may say to Colonel von Gilsa that we shouldn't cry before we're hurt. What have you to report, sir?" he continued, whirling sharply on Ingraham.

Rex had flushed with indignation, nothing less, at the tone, manner and words of the division commander. Winn, too, he could see, had reddened under the tan of long months of campaigning, and stood mute but wrathful.

"I add to Colonel Winn's report that I have seen the dust clouds of a heavy column marching north round to our right. I know the very road that they are on, sir, and the pickets say they've been marching steadily since eleven o'clock at least."

"Take your story to General Howard, if you wish," was the sole reply, as the general rose, nervously, irritably to his feet and glanced about him. Winn turned and gazed one moment appealingly into the grave, impassive face of McLean, but the general who knew and believed him was weighed down by sense of subordination and would not speak. With silent salute, without another word, John Winn turned on his heel, remounted and rode away, Rex Ingraham following.

"Who was that officer,—that lieutenant colonel?" demanded Devens, turning again and staring after them, irresolute, dissatisfied.

"Lieutenant Colonel John Winn, sir,—New York, one of the most reliable officers in the division," was McLean's uncompromising answer.

"I wish I could get *some one* to make a reconnoissance for me!" said the senior, in wrath and incertitude. Something told him these men spake truth and were not the kind to be easily scared. A young captain of volunteer cavalry who but the moment before had declared he had been to the right and had seen strong columns of all arms on the pike, turned almost sadly as he heard the words. He had gone farther than was prudent and these were his thanks for daring service and unimpeachable information. "I can go again and go further, if you wish, general," said he, with quiet dignity, "but I cannot promise to return."

And in this way the long hot afternoon was frittered away, while Stonewall Jackson, once again and for the last time, was repeating his famous and familiar trick of marching round the Union lines in order to deal a telling blow on an exposed and helpless flank. Seventy stalwart regiments, many of them his own pet "foot cavalry," he had dared to lead across the long, entrenched front of the Third and Twelfth Corps, and completely around the long, unsheltered lines of the Eleventh, strung out upon the pike,—thirty thousand seasoned, disciplined, devoted, enthusiastic men, striding long miles at his back without cheer or sound, without halt for food or rest, and finally, as the sun went westering and the watches of the staff told that five o'clock was come, there he marshalled them at right angles to the pike. and to the thin, extended line of the Eleventh Corps, midway between the Talley and Luckett homesteads, stretching nearly two miles north and

south through the woods, where Rex, day after day, had been rabbit shooting seventeen months before. Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina—Rhodes's gallant division—stood in the first rank; Virginia, Louisiana, North Carolina—Colston's veterans—in the second, only an hundred yards behind, while A. P. Hill, with the famous Light Division, was still striding into position to form the third,—all this was going on within one mile of where Charles Devens sat fuming at the Talley farm, within two miles of where Howard, head of the corps, sat watching the result of the exploration started southward from the Third and Twelfth Corps, now crossing the trail of Jackson's vanished men, and soon to return and report the whole Confederate army gone to Gordonsville. Oh, the blindness of those who will not see! What more warning *could* they have had of that wrath so soon to come? Colonel Friend, field-officer-of-the-day, had reported to his division commander that large bodies of the enemy were moving round to their rear, and he, too, was told to take his story to corps headquarters. He did and came back disconcerted,—told that he must not start rumors that might bring on a panic. Hubert Dilger, captain of Schurz's finest battery, sent by Schurz himself to the right to see what could be done in case of attack, went beyond von Gilsa's flank, came face to face with the advancing gray battalions, and after a hairbreadth escape from pursuing cavalry who headed him off and drove him northward, he succeeded in reaching a road that took him to Hooker's headquarters, where he told his tale to a major

of the staff and was bidden sneeringly to take it to his own corps. He did, only to be further rebuked for straggling. Colonels Lee of Ohio's 55th, and Richardson, of the 25th, going to their brigade and division commanders with their positive assurance of the presence of the foe, were ordered summarily, not by McLean but by Devens, back to their commands, with caustic comment at their unnecessary scare. Even von Gilsa, brigade commander, and nearest the enemy, riding in person to Howard's headquarters with the evil tidings, could make no impression, and, so he said, was sent back with taunts. McLean's colonels all felt that an attack was coming from the west, and yet, all but two of von Gilsa's battalions, Devens's division, remained stationed still facing south along the pike, when in wrath and fury the storm burst from the west.

Before five o'clock John Winn was back with his battalion, one of the two of von Gilsa's line that had been formed facing southward, and with rifles in hand, was at the moment standing in the roadway, with two guns of a volunteer battery planted to their right, commanding the pike toward Lucketts. In front of Winn was a thick, leafy forest in which, perhaps two hundred yards out at the utmost, the pickets were groping. By his side, silent, anxious, but with nothing else to do, rode Rex Ingraham. To Colonel von Gilsa, commanding the brigade, Winn had presented his friend, and with pale, compressed lips and angering eyes, had reported the ill result of his first and only interview with the division commander. The men in the right regiment were largely German by birth, men

who long had loved and followed their German leader, yet they had learned still later to pin their faith on the sleeve of this stern, silent but just and soldierly lieutenant colonel. For long months, ever since von Gilsa's elevation, Winn had been their actual commander, and now they swore by him. There had been little time for talk between these two men, Winn and Ingraham, separated long months and reunited here in the forefront of probable, indeed imminent, battle. There are moments in even an ardent lover's life, when even such a face as Alice Langdon's fades from the mental vision, and when the throb of the war drum sets the pulse to responsive bounding such as even the pressure of lips beloved might fail to rouse. There is a stern delight the soldier knows that shadows even the ecstasy of woman's sweet avowal. To him there lives no joy so thrilling as the tribute that rings in the wild cheer of the embattled line, that beams in the thousands of soldier faces uplifted in utter faith and trust, that sparkles in deep-set, soldier eyes, blazing with fealty and devotion, that tells to a listening army that here rides the leader whose command over comrade hearts is as absolute as over their destinies. What knight would surrender such a love as that for the caress of a Cleopatra? The girl for whose kiss John Winn would give years of his resolute life, for whose sake Rex Ingraham had betrayed his better self, faded for the moment from the thoughts of either as ten companies of veteran soldiery, anxious, restless, murmuring even but the moment before, sprang to ranks with exultant cheers and welcomed back the com-

mander they had missed,—all doubts removed, all danger scorned, all fears derided now that again their own “old man” was there to lead them.

“I’d give a fortune for a cheer like that,” said Ingraham, a moment later, as having ridden along the line of his men, the lieutenant colonel commanding dismounted in rear of the colors, his eyes kindling through the mist of unshed tears.

“And yet,—think,—I have not the right or power to save them,” muttered Winn, as he returned the pressure of his comrade’s handclasp. “Now, Ingraham,” added he, briskly, “I’ve got some instructions to give my wing commanders—there’ll be no hearing anything if these fellows come, as I think they will—then I’ve got to creep out a ways to that front,” and he pointed westward.

“You shan’t,” was the sudden interruption. “Your place is here with your men. Mine is there because I know those woods better than I know Central Park. You heard what I told General Devens.”

From near the right of the line of dingy blue, now leaning on its rifles and waiting Winn’s order, stretched another line northward through straggling timber, its right resting close to a little woodroad leading north of west, its left extending to the pike. Two regiments, only, formed that line, one of Pennsylvania, the other from New York. In front of each the trees were so numerous, the foliage so thick, that the eye could penetrate at no point more than forty or fifty yards. Straight to this little rift of a wood path now rode the young captain of Horse, passing un-

hindered the group of half a dozen officers, gazing eagerly along that narrow vista. "I am on staff duty," he said, briefly, in answer to inquiring looks. "Your pickets are out here, I suppose?"

"Not more'n a hundred yards. You'll have to watch out, sir. There was firing there not half an hour ago." And so indeed there had been when gallant Dilger was making his solitary scout. Rex nodded and rode on. A dozen rods and a lieutenant sprang out and sought to stay him, but gave way at his brief words. A dozen more and a low whistle to his left drew his eyes to a dim recess in the shrubbery where some blue-bloused soldiery were crouching, and excitedly signalling "Down, down!" Rex slipped from saddle; left his horse with them; and, bending low and dodging among the trees along the cart track, was within thirty paces bidden to halt by stern, low voices close at hand. Then a corporal, on all fours, crept upon him from a clump of trees and demanded that he go no further. Nothing but a line of single, scattered sentries interposed between them now and "a line of rebs that stretch clean out of sight." It might well be that, thought Rex, and not be more than a small battalion. "You can hear 'em—plain," said the soldier, and Ingraham said that's what he came for; gave his name and rank; pointed to his horse, half hidden at the picket post, and then crept on. It was a famous place for rabbits. He had known it well, but never before had it brimmed with interest so thrilling as at this moment. The corporal crept after him, and presently they came upon a soldier sprawled upon his

stomach, peering through the shrubbery in his front. He said no word, he simply pointed, and, following the direction of the index finger and focusing, as it were, his eyes upon the object, Rex made out a torn felt hat and a battered cap of gray, bobbing together over bearded faces and bent shoulders, all the red brown color of Virginia mud, the result of a ten mile march in dust so thick its very shadow seemed to stifle the senses of the Union chiefs. "And there's more of 'em every ten yards of front," whispered the sentry, "and there's a line o' battle not fifty yards behind 'em or may I never see the City Hall again! Listen!"

Listen they did, and through the silent woods, unstirred by even a breath of breeze, they could hear, muffled, yet quite distinct, the words of command as the Southern officers aligned their men. "Back, extreme left 26th!" "Back, back, Sixth Alabama!" It was some soldierly fellow straightening the ranks of his brigade. Then cautious, yet clear and firm, perhaps the last admonition to the company officers, came other words, some even reaching the Union pickets. "Remember, gentlemen; keep your men in hand; guide on the center! Look to the colors of the Twenty-sixth!"

"By heaven, they're coming!" muttered Ingraham. "You'll see their pickets ducking in another minute." His heart was throbbing in his breast. The very thought of such attack—whole brigades in line, with only two battalions formed and faced to meet it, was enough to thrill the dead. Back he scurried, almost on all fours, until he

reached the supports. "Coming? Of course they're coming," he answered the anxious query of the men. "But—you know your orders."

Back he rode at eager trot, bending low among the trees to escape the fate of Chalmers, and then, once more venturing on the cart track, increased yet controlled the speed. "No officer should ever come galloping back from the front," he had heard John Buford say. "And no staff officer should ever even look excited." He was trying to seem preternaturally cool as he came again in sight of the 54th, not three hundred strong, waiting without a comrade to their right, for the onset of overwhelming numbers. Back of their line he drove, whispered a word to their swarthy commander, then hurried on to where von Gilsa sat, surrounded by his little staff.

Briefly and as calmly as he could, Ingraham recounted what he had seen and heard. Winn had watched him coming and seemed to read the tidings in his face, for he abruptly closed the notebook in which he had been writing, mounted and turned his horse's head as though to join them, while along both fronts and among the westward pointing cannon, the silent soldiers leaning on their rifles, or sprawled or seated among the trees, turned eagerly and watched them. Von Gilsa saw, and coolly taking out his watch remarked the hour. "Just 4:55," said he. "Thank you, Captain Ingraham. I will not ask you to go again to General Devens, but," lowering his voice and addressing a member of his staff, "go you, sir. Tell him what Captain Ingraham reports and say that for the last time I

beg permission to form front to meet it." Then spurred over to his Pennsylvanians, who stood to attention at his coming. Soon Winn and Ingraham were again together out of earshot of the murmuring line. Down the road three field officers of McLean's Ohio regiments had just ridden back to their men. They had been in conference with von Gilsa but the moment before Ingraham's return, and now Colonel Reiley had signalled to the Seventy-fifth, and in silence they gathered, four hundred stalwart veterans about their honored chief, and in silence listened to his solemn words. "A great battle," said he, "is imminent, and some of us will never see the rising of another sun. If there is a man in the ranks not ready to die for his country let him come to me and I will send him to the rear, for I want no half hearted soldier with me to-night," and then with parting admonition bade them go back to their lines, lie down, rest on their arms and be ready. It was prophetic. Other battalions saw it, some heard, and all seemed to know what must be meant. Devens still clung to the idea that the assault would come from the south. Men longer schooled in "Stonewall Jackson's way" looked steadily to the west.

"Ingraham," said Winn, "if you get back to Washington and I do not, will you deliver this—for me?" and he held forth a letter. The superscription was so large and clear that Rex could read it before he took it in his hand. "Miss Alice Langdon, Brookside, Washington." In his saddle-bags was a letter bearing precisely the same address. Ingraham turned hot, then cold. He strove to

speak. "I—meant to ask you; I ought to—tell you," he began when stilled by sudden stir and cry.

"Look!" said Winn. "Look! Another!" Then the Pennsylvanians were springing to their feet, laughing nervously and shouting. Two—three rabbits, wild-eyed, terror stricken, had burst from the thicket in their front and darted, zigzagging every which way, and finally dove through the interval between the rousing battalions, even as others, equally mad with fright and bewilderment, came bounding from the wood and diving blindly through the lines. A deer burst from the thicket in front of the 54th. Here, there and everywhere men were springing up and shouting. The tension of the hour found relief in boyish laugh and joke, but there were others who read the signs aright. "They are coming now, by heaven!" cried Winn—"and sweeping the woods before them!" Then the horses started, snorting nervously. Two shots rang out on the pike toward Lockett's, two more through the woods in front; then half a dozen,—sputtering. More rabbits came tearing into view, and men—men bending double, speeding *ventre a terre*—men in blue rushing in along the pike, wild-eyed almost as the rabbits and gasping in inarticulate alarm. Then began a rattle of shots along the front to the north of the pike, coming nearer and nearer, and then, backing toward the peering, quivering battle lines, here and there and everywhere through that westward timber, came little squads and groups of steadier soldiery, facing still a foe unseen by the main body—the faithful pickets, vainly striving to stem the steady onward

march of a tramping host, for now, through the desultory, scattering skirmish fire came a sound like the low, sullen rumble and roar of approaching storm.

When last these men of Devens stood in line to meet the charge of Jackson's foot cavalry, the gray battalions rushed on with shrill, exultant, piercing yells. Now after one rousing shout at the start—a shout strangely muffled by the woods, they were coming silent and grim as death. "Load at will!" the order had passed along the Union lines, and the steel rammers flashed in the slanting rays of the sun, obscured a moment later by the thin, dun, dust cloud climbing slowly above the trees. All on a sudden the guns at the angle, crammed with canister, were hurriedly sighted along the pike. "Don't fire!" screamed a major. "You'll butcher our own pickets!" for men in blue were still drifting in. "Ready!" rang the word through the westward ranks of Von Gilsa, while Winn and Ingraham and their own officers were striving to throw the right wing of the Forty-first, and front it to the sun. Nearly a thousand gleaming barrels ducked as the hammers flew back at the grip of the thumb. Nearly a thousand sunburned, swarthy faces stared keenly into the crackling, crashing forest in front. "Look! Watch out!" the excited murmur passed from lip to lip, and still their officers, bending forward in saddle or peering over heaving shoulders, cautioned and restrained them, ordering wait until the foe came in view. It was only a minute. "See there! See there! Battle flags!" went up a half stifled cry. Then rang the command "Fire at will,

Com——” but was drowned in the fearful crash of volleying thousands barely fifty yards away, and twigs and leaves came fluttering down in answer to the hissing storm of lead, and men rocked and staggered and some plunged heavily, face downward, and the colors swayed as though swept by a tempest, and then far as eye could reach to right and left, from north to south, a stifling, bluish cloud had settled in the timber, shrouding the advancing line against which, blindly, the unscathed men of the two battalions leveled their futile fire and, crouching, strove in haste to load again. There were shouts and execrations, the cries of sorely wounded men, the ring of the bugles sending the alarm far down the eastward lines, the roar of the twin guns on the pike—their last for the day—there were cannoneers for no more. Then right, left and in front, low, well-aimed and together, more crashing, crushing volleys that swept and shattered the blue ranks and felled full a third of their strength, and then, on through the smoke,—steady, vengeful, overwhelming in number, irresistible in force,—the gray brigades of Georgia and Alabama, backed by Virginia and North Carolina, and supported far on either flank by swift speeding comrades who found no foe whatever, strode on in deadly vehemence, stopping only to fire, only to seize the guns there was no time to drag away, and so, ten to one, rolled over the remnant of Von Gilsa’s line, Winn’s helpless yet heroic hundred with them, rolled up the Forty-fifth, next regiment to the left, and then met with sudden check, though the long left flank came lapping round from the

north, enveloping the scattered regiments of Schurz's division in the clearings about the Hawkins farm. Stopped for the moment was the Southern center, but only for the moment, for the second line was prodding on the first. And in that brief interval frantic efforts were being made by Union officers of every grade to check what had become a general rush for the rear. By scores and hundreds the men of von Gilsa's brigade, not already engulfed in the gray torrent, were drifting eastward through the woods, sweeping with them in some cases even the sturdy Anglo Saxon sons of Ohio—veterans of a dozen fiercely battled fields. There is one thing the best and bravest troops on earth can never stand, and that is, vigorous attack in flank. They know they are helpless,—that they are swept down, enfiladed, “raked,” to use a sailorism, by a fire to which they cannot reply. Despite the heroism of McLean and his devoted officers and men, Devens's division was crumpled up and swept away in the storm. There had been ample time to “change front to rear on the left” and form and even entrench a sturdy line before Jackson came sweeping on. But, because no order was received from Corps Headquarters, Devens was deaf to appeals. Now there was no time whatever. To stand meant only useless sacrifice of gallant men. Left to itself, neglected, derided, scoffed at, the Eleventh Corps was being whipped in detail, seventy battalions in three parallel lines against twenty-three on edge, and only twenty-three, for Barlow and his brigade were far out south of Hazel Grove and of no use in the fight. In vain the men of Schurz's Division

were hurriedly arrayed. They, too, were overwhelmed in turn and forced back on the eastward woods; and finally, as darkness drew near and the flashing volleys grew red and redder, even strong regiments and battalions, cavalry and infantry, holding the works at Hazel Grove, finding that Jackson was sweeping eastward behind them, cutting them off from the fords, in their own time took alarm and there ensued a scamper toward the Chancellor field, quite as sheeplike as anything occurring at the Dowdall farm. Many a noble and devoted soldier by this time had died in the effort to stem the deluge, but with the end of the day the battle was won to the South at a cost far exceeding its value. In the darkness and confusion at nine o'clock, with scattered lines of battle, brigade and battalion, facing every which way, the inspiration and genius of many a victory went down under the nervous volley of his own men. In Stonewall Jackson there was lost to the Confederacy that which it could never regain. In Chancellorsville there was lost to the Union that which it felt for a few weeks only and, for it, took full satisfaction on the slopes of Cemetery Ridge almost within another moon.

But at eight o'clock Rex Ingraham, dragged again from under his dying horse, faint with hunger and exhaustion, found breath enough to ask of the surgeon examining his crushed and twisted leg: "Where have you left Colonel Winn?" and the answer came with mournful shake of the head:

"Dead under Dieckmann's guns. He never came back. He fell while you were rallying the Keystones."

CHAPTER XXII

SUMMONED HOME

THE weeks that followed close upon the heels of that mournful May evening were full of vital import to Rex Ingraham. Recalled to duty with his general within the fortnight, despite a badly battered leg and a sorely grieving heart, our captain was amazed to hear the stories bandied from lip to lip. In big semicircle, north, east and south of Chancellor's, five strong *corps d'armee* had been heavily entrenched, awaiting possible assault that never came, and ignorant apparently of conditions to the west, where, with its unprotected right thrust in slender isolation far out into the woods, the corps of Howard stood alone. Leaving barely three divisions to watch fifteen, Lee had sent his right bower, with nearly half of the Army of North Virginia, in wide circuit to fall upon and smash that luckless command, defenseless through no fault of its own old officers. No cavalry had been ordered to explore the pike and wood roads beyond them. Pleasanton and his regiments were strangely occupied about the center instead of the flanks. The persistent reports to the effect that the enemy was massing in force, sent in by soldiers who knew whereof they spoke, were

treated with contempt. The frequent appeals to be permitted to change front and form to meet the impending attack were utterly ignored. No corps in the army, placed as was the Eleventh, could have held its ground. "They fled without firing a shot" declared officers of high rank who ought to have known far better. They fought, many of them, until it was madness to hold on another instant. They blocked and broke the assaulting center, but lost scores of soldier lives in the noble, yet useless effort. They suffered, as many another soldier has suffered, more from the evil report of self-shielding superiors than the blows of the common enemy. And, in its carefully fostered ignorance of the real facts, the grand Army of the Potomac was permitted to revile the Eleventh Corps as sole cause of the pitiful failure of a campaign that had opened brilliantly.

And this was the trend of talk Rex Ingraham had to hear, all over the camps along the Rappahannock, during those few bitter days before word came for the cavalry to hie away westward and watch the fords, for Lee was surely stretching forth a hand toward the old fields far up stream, and Ingraham's soul was up in arms. He with his own eyes had seen how valiantly McLean and von Gilsa, gallant Reily, Lee and Richardson had battled to save the day, how "Leather Breeches" Dilger had worked his single gun along the pike, fighting furiously to the last. He, at least, well knew how nobly Colonel Reily and sturdy John Winn and many a man in humbler station had fallen on the foremost line, steadfast even when prac-

tically deserted and left to their fate, and so, day after day, he found himself in heated argument with officers who had seen nothing except the flock of fugitives that came streaming in toward Chancellors, many of them from Hazel Grove, and it ended in his finally being ordered back to his regiment where he was glad enough to go.

There was no one, of course, at the time to tell how particularly distinguished had been the conduct of this particular captain of cavalry, in the effort to keep a fighting front in face of Jackson's volleying brigades. Of the officers of rank who saw it, some were dead; some, in utter disgust at their treatment by superiors, had resigned and gone home where a few, at least, ran in earnest and to some purpose, and were elected to office and then could talk. Some, too, had asked to be transferred to distant fields where, under other leaders, they won honors denied them so long as they wore the crescent; but, during these two or three tempestuous weeks of talk and recrimination, Ingraham's general had been charged with the duty of conveying some prisoners to the Potomac, and thinking it wise to put his young troop leader out of the way until people's tempers were less explosive, that sagacious cavalryman sent Rex himself. There were not fifty captives in the batch and few were of consequence to the general government. But two of them, said the officer of the guard, wished to speak with Captain Ingraham. "Send them in," said Rex, in surprise, glancing up from the field desk at which he was writing in the dimly-lighted tent. They came, with a sentry in charge of each; one a tall

Virginian, the other a slender little Creole. "Have I the honor of addressing Mr. Worth, of Washington?" grinned the former, extending his hand, which Rex shook heartily as he recognized the farmer, Burton; then turned curiously on the diminutive officer beside him. "Surely it is—Edouard Frenier!" said he.

"Assuredly," was the reply, with much stateliness of mien and tone. "Sous lieutenant, if you please, and ver much at the service of M. le Capitaine Ingraham, whose valor I had the honor to witness from the ôtel Dowdall whither I went to tell your generals my bee-utiful—what you call *coq a l'ane*?—my, ah yes, cock an' bull story that we were r-r-running to Gordonsville."

"Were you the officer they brought in there near Burton's?" asked Rex, a light dawning upon him. He had heard before of one of Jackson's pious frauds—that of having some duly instructed officer captured with most interesting but totally misleading tales to tell as to his movements and intentions. Frenier showed his beautiful teeth in an expansive smile. "I was the officer, indeed, an', now that I go to Wasshangtoun, is it not enough? Is it not permit to my guide that he ritturn to the bosom of his familiee? "

"There is nothing I would not do to oblige Mr. Burton," said Ingraham, dubiously, while the tall Virginian stood there indulgently smiling. That family was safe at Gordonsville and well cared for. Farming was rather at a discount then. The business of guide was far more lucrative, only, he had ventured just a few rods too far in

showing Frenier the Yankee lines, and Fitz Lee's men, guarding Stonewall Jackson himself on the porch of the Burton homestead, waited vainly for the good man's return. "I'll ask for your release, Burton," said he, "but I fear it won't be granted. You'll probably have to go with M. Frenier."

"And you too, Ingraham," said his general, entering at the moment and laying despatches upon the table. "They want you at the War Department."

There was not a little wonderment and speculation at more than one headquarters when it became known that Captain Ingraham had been summoned by the Secretary of War. There was even, in one or two cases, rather perceptible uneasiness. Here was a man, not a member of the Eleventh Corps at all, but a rank outsider, who had taken up the cudgels for "the Dutchmen" in no faltering grasp. He had seen with his eyes and heard with his ears the approach of Jackson's men. He had warned, and persisted in his warning, as far as subordination could possibly permit. He knew other warnings had been scoffed at and that the fell disaster was no fault of the corps. Could it be that that terrible Stanton, too, had heard and was bent on investigating? That was indeed Ingraham's one idea the bright June morning he turned over his prisoners at the wharf, and, after breakfast and a brush off at Willard's, reported at the War Department. He had made many an enemy contradicting officers of various ranks at the front; was it possible that now he was ordered here to face the fiercest fault-finder of all, to beard this bearded

Pennsylvania lawyer-lion in his den? "The Secretary will see you at once," said an officer throwing open a door, and, with his heart in his mouth but his head held high, bent on standing by his guns if he died for it, like Winn, or was denied promotion to the end of the war, like Dilger, he marched straight in to the presence of the Iron Secretary and was astounded at his first question:—

"What do you know of Hugh Chalmers of Fredericksburg?"

The revulsion was so great that for a moment Rex could hardly answer. Then, with those grim, spectacled eyes studying him, and with that sharp tongue cutting in with many a cross-question, Ingraham told his story to a half incredulous but most attentive listener.

"You may go," said the Secretary, at last. Then, as Ingraham faced about, abruptly shouted after him: "Stop! Do you know anything of the present whereabouts of that man Blunt?" Ingraham turned again:—

"No, sir."

"You know—who he is—or what, I suppose," glowering.

"I don't *know* anything about him, sir. I believe him—a blackguard."

"He's worse than that, sir," answered Stanton, bristling all over; "He's a spy: a Northern man in rebel employ, and if ever you set claws on him again, sir——" bang came the fist upon the table—"hang him!"

"With pleasure, Mr. Secretary," answered Ingraham,

gaining in composure as the official waxed in wrath. "But I think—the rebels will save us the trouble."

"Why?" The question came like a shot.

"*They* say he's a thief and a liar. One of the prisoners I brought up, captured the Second of May, knows all about him, Lieutenant Frenier of Louisiana."

"Get his full statement in writing and bring it here to-morrow—no—next day. That's all. And this time there was no recall. Determining to say a word for Burton at the next opportunity, Rex betook himself to the office of the provost marshal; saw Frenier at once; carefully wrote out his accusation of the former "factor" and then, taking a hack, drove out to Brookside.

"The ladies," said the old negro servant who welcomed him, "went to town an hour ago. Mahrs' Frenier, suh, has been brought there a prisoner," and then was surprised and disappointed that the captain had brought no luggage and was not to be shown to his old room. Ingraham said he would write a note at Mrs. Langdon's desk, and sipped the sherry brought him, as he pondered over what he had to say.

His letters to Alice Langdon had been infrequent: hers to him had been written almost every day and posted whenever there seemed likelihood of their reaching him. His letters to her had been full of tenderness and of deep appreciation of all they had done for him, but told rather more of life at the front and all the vehement longing of his soldier nature to meet the enemy than of love for, and eagerness to be with, her again. Everything with Alice

seemed centered in the thought of his safety—his speedy return. Everything with him seemed subordinate to that one idea,—the total overthrow of armed resistance to the national authority,—the subjugation or surrender of the last armed foe of the United States. Other girls had ardent letters from lovers at the front—letters that they read and re-read and kissed and sometimes showed to her. Alice read and re-read hers, perhaps kissed and fondled them, but they did not read quite as did these that some of her friends so shyly, yet delightedly read and showed to her. So to them she neither read nor showed her own. They were letters, however, of which her mother seemed much to approve. He was so fine,—so thorough—a soldier, said she, and so did poor Agatha, sighing in silence for the soldier she had loved and lost,—he who was that saddest of men, a born soldier robbed by fate of the right to serve.

There had been no time for Rex to write and tell of his coming. Indeed he *had* written, in answer to her appeal that he come to them again and “be taken care of until strong,” that his hurts were trivial and that he could not think of asking for leave. Alice knew two or three young fellows, whose hurts at Chancellorsville were not more serious, who had made glad the hearts of fond maids about her by appearing in splints, slings or bandages as much as a week, some even trying to wear them longer. “Rex Ingraham is deep, not demonstrative,” is what the poor girl tried to teach herself to think and say. The papers for the week after the disaster of May Second had been filled

with sad details. With eyes that welled over in tears, she read the brief announcement of the heroic death of Colonel Winn, cheering his men to the last, falling between Dieckmann's guns and into the lands of the charging line, but the tears perhaps, were quite as much for her captain and the peril that compassed him about. That he was hurt at all they heard only casually some days later. Ingraham merely told of a twisted foot.

And now he sat there in the cool and shaded hallway, and old Blondo came to lean his great head on his knee and mutely beg for a caress, and Rex patted and stroked the big fellow to his manifest delight, all the time trying to think what he should say. Why should he write at all? Within the hour they would surely meet. He would drive back to town and find them at the provost marshal's or wherever Frenier by that time had been taken. There was never difficulty at Washington in seeing Southern prisoners. Few, indeed, of them as yet came that way. It ended in his leaving a message for Mrs. Langdon. If he did not find them in town he would return to Brookside early in the evening. Then, instead of going direct to the provost marshal's, Rex bade his driver take him to Willard's. He was but just from the front. His best uniform, not the one he wore in battle, was all very well, but his hair was long and ragged. His thick, blonde beard needed trimming. He was nearly an hour delayed, and when he reached the provost marshal's they had been there and gone, said an officer. Yes, they had seen Lieutenant Frenier, who, with other prisoners had now been

sent to the railway station. "That little Frenchman," said he, "told them you had been here, and it made something of a sensation. They left very soon after, to his evident disappointment. What's the matter with him?—sweet on that younger sister?"

It was not until late that Ingraham, for the second time, reached Brookside. It was later when Mrs. Langdon and Agatha came down to greet him. They had left her to welcome him and to sob out her excitement, emotion, suspense, delight, distress at all the untoward complications. She had gone fluttering to his outstretched arms the moment the hack had turned away, and then even Blondo could not win a touch or caress. She clung to her soldier, poor child, and wept unrebuked, unrestrained, and close held in his strong arms as he bent and kissed her soft, rippling hair. She was comforted for a moment, then confounded at his answer that he could stay only a day at most,—that even now the cavalry were on the move. He dined, and spent the early hours of the soft June evening with them, but said there were many matters he had to attend to, both for himself and for comrades who could not get to Washington. He would return for luncheon on the next day, and Alice went with him to the gateway to the lane—and was long returning. Her few doubts and dreads seemed to vanish in his presence, under his caress. She was happy again, and oh, so proud of him. But luncheon waited long and vainly on the morrow. It was nearly three when he reached them. The city was full of excitement. The air was athrill with news. Lee was

surely on the move again. Buford and Stuart had clashed at Beverly Ford. His own regiment must be there—somewhere. He had finished his business at the Department. He must take a special train going out to Bristoe that evening. His carriage would wait. In an hour he was gone, but—not so the train. It never went until after eight, said a friend and neighbor who had reason to know, but who omitted to say that it should have started at six. Then there *was* something Rex Ingraham loved better than he loved her, was her sorrowing plaint to her pillow that almost sleepless night, while he was trundling away to the front, thinking, thinking of poor John Winn and how much better it might all have been if——

But with the dewy morn, and the sight of squadrons aligned, and the sound of the trumpet, the flash of a thousand sabres saluting the brigade commander galloping by, the light in the eyes of his own troop as again he rode to their front, all thought of the past, all dread of the future vanished. “Act, act in the living present!” were the words that rang through his brain, as again he felt the thrill of delight in the spirited charger curveting under his weight as though it were a feather tossing his handsome head, tugging at the bit, pawing the sacred soil all eagerness for the word. Even the horses seemed to know the need was great. Even the patient infantry tramping sturdily through the twisting roadways, seemed to stride an extra mile to every hour, for once again Lee’s long gray columns were heading for the Potomac, and the grandest race of the long four years was begun.

Day and night Rex rode, scouted, searched for Jeb Stuart, lost somewhere to their right front, and swore at heavy trains, stalled somewhere in the dusty rear. With all his eager heart he envied the men of Buford's Division, breaking the way into Pennsylvania. With all his soul afire he was sent with his troop to escort the new general-in-chief, riding hot foot through the moonlight to reach the scene of the check along Cemetery Ridge. With thrilling excitement he galloped to Gregg, far out to the east, the hot morn of the third and last day at Gettysburg, with the stirring message from Meade:—"Stuart is here—Look out for the right;" and with fierce, wild, delirious joy, spurred in with the glorious charge that finally swept the field and drove even the cavalier sons of the South to the screen of the sheltering woods. That day he rode boot to boot with men who could not be maligned, and on a field that at last called for no scapegoat, and the slight wound received, a pistol shot in the side—won him more reward, as the field won more fame, than all the fighting of his past combined. "*Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ*" to battle and bleed, especially when under the appreciative eye of the general commanding.

"Two weeks leave for you, Rex, old boy," cried Carden, a few nights later, rejoicing in his own recommendation for the brevet of major. It was at the field hospital near the Hanover road, and Ingraham looked ruefully down at his ruined uniform. "Never mind your clothes, man. Wire ahead and fit out with flannels and white duck.

You've got to get a double breasted coat next time, anyhow."

"Letters for Captain Ingraham," said a hospital attendant, handing a little packet, forwarded from headquarters of the cavalry corps, and Carden vanished. Four, in the hand that directed most of his missives, he thrust into an inner pocket. Others were glanced at in succession. Then came one in a Union Club envelope, and he knew the superscription and opened at once.

"June 30th, 1863.

"DEAR INGRAHAM:—

"We are in New York, *en route* to the Catskills. Madame Frenier and the children, at least, benefited by their winter's sojourn in Havana. It became too hot for me, but not until after I had made it too hot for another,—that fellow Burnham, who came there from his broker office in New York to meet them, and by them I mean Mr. and Miss Raynor and Mrs. Fairbanks. They meant to make, I think, a longer stay, but remained only a few days after our meeting, for incidentally I pulled Mr. Burnham's nose in front of the Palace. God be thanked I am not debarred from every kind of a fight. He preferred flight, however, and the family followed. They are now here under Watson's wing at the Astor House, but seeking a cool place for the summer, as this promises to be as hot as—Havana, and Ingraham, I wish you were here, too. Something in that girl's eyes tells me more than I know how to tell you.

"Only two letters have reached me from you in over six months, but I heard of the capture of that fool Frenier and of our friend Burton, also of your efforts in behalf of both, for one of which, at least, I am grateful. From Brookside, of course, I hear and can expect to hear nothing. From—the other side, I hear—

too much. That unhappy woman has taken to levying even on me.

"Of what I think of the situation in Pennsylvania you will not thank me to write. May God speedily bring this most woeful conflict to a close, but I fear He will not until my people are ground between the millstones. You cannot leave your squadron now, but the moment you can—come.

"Yours faithfully,

"HUGH CHALMERS."

"P. S.—Strange! A note from Mr. Watson, begging me to name time and place for an interview. I have named the Brevoort to-morrow, four P. M."

CHAPTER XXIII

"THE VOLCANO UNDER THE CITY"

COULD this be Fifth Avenue? Stretching from curb to curb a thin line of police, battling desperately with their clubs, was striving to force before them an almost solid mass of raging, howling, brick-hurling ruffians, who but the moment before had wrecked and pillaged one of the stateliest homes along that famous thoroughfare. Without a pane of glass left in its front windows, with costly curtains, hangings, and furniture dumped into the stone area way, with lamps, mirrors, chandeliers and table ware smashed and ruined, with blood in slippery puddles on every step and sill, with terrified domestics shrieking from the roof and the aged negro butler lying gashed and senseless in the marble hall, with blinds and shutters ominously closed and outer doors securely bolted at every other house along the block, with street and sidewalk both deserted for a dozen squares below, and swarming with blood-stained, brutal, drink-maddened roughs for a dozen squares above, with a score of sorely wounded feebly groping and moaning along the flagstones and the Belgian block pavement, with the sound of thudding blows and fierce cursings, and shouts of rage

and defiance, with the dull, measured boom of the fire bells in their lofty towers, calling all unheeded to the old time defenders, with heat and death and fire and rapine on every side, the richest, proudest city of the Union had been for two fearful days at the mercy of its mob, law and order battling in vain for mastery. Victory had crowned at last the struggles and sacrifices of the grand Army of the Potomac. Victory had rewarded the heroism of the gallant Army of the Tennessee. Lee had fallen back on the Potomac. Vicksburg had fallen on the Mississippi, but war had burst forth around our very hearth stones, and a reign of terror had opened in New York. Stripped of its militia, still far in Pennsylvania; dependent only upon its brave but exhausted police, the city had well nigh lost both heart and hope. Such few regulars as could be scraped together from the Island forts or from West Point were needed to guard the treasury, the banks, the public buildings, the post and newspaper offices. Private citizens dare not venture on the streets. Helpless negroes, even to little children, were hunted up and kicked to death wherever found, their homes and asylums burned above their heads. Crippled veteran soldiers of the Union were barbarously beaten, many of them foully murdered. The head of the police department had been clubbed to a pulp. In her despair, the city called for the Governor, for the mob was to a man of his political persuasion. In his fatuity he came and appealed to them as "my friends," an appeal which failed to disperse them. Then, at last, home came the troops, and their volleys ended the sat-

urnalia. But it had been a carnival of crime, of blood and brutality that the *sans culotte* of the French revolution might well have envied. It had wrought untold damage and dismay in a community utterly unprepared for such catastrophe. It had brought about strange reunion among some of those referred to in our earlier pages. Hugh Chalmers, who could not fight against his flag, nor yet his state, had no compunctions as against a mob, and hastening back to town, had tendered his services to the general now commanding—a general without so much as a regiment at his back, but one who had known Hugh Chalmers in better days, and gladly bade him welcome. Rex Ingraham, back from Gettysburg, not too strong as yet, but just as ready, reaching New York the first night of the riots, had lost no time in finding this same old army veteran, and General Harvey Brown had another skilled soldier at his beck and call. Then these two, once so closely allied, then so long separated, were thus a third time brought together—Chalmers and Ingraham, and each with his work cut out for him.

Lawyers' offices, as has been said, were mainly far down town in those days, and Watson's looked out on Wall street and commanded in part, at least, a view of the great steps of the sub-treasury building, where in the late afternoon of the third day, while mobs were still surging to and fro far up town, a public meeting had been held, addressed by prominent citizens, and, now that the news had come that the Seventh and other strong commands were homeward bound again, the great gathering had later re-

solved itself into an impromptu demonstration, an overflow of patriotism, much frothy sentiment and champagne. Brokers, clerks, messengers innumerable thronged the narrow street and crammed the wide, white marble steps, cheering tumultuously favored speakers of their own selection. One after another, magniloquent or merely over-excited youths had shouted themselves hoarse in the effort to make their flowing periods audible over the uproar, and then there was renewed yelling and waving of hats, and Rex Ingraham, just returning from an inspection of the guards and sentries at the old post office, and blocked in his effort to reach the sub-treasury, was suddenly attracted by the repetition of a once familiar name. Brokers and brokers' clerks by the hundreds were clamoring for "Burnham," "Burnham." And, with his nerves tingling, the Union officer turned to look and listen. A slim built, elegant young man, straw hat in hand, responding to the call, came smiling forward to the edge of the upper step, bowing gracefully, easily, cordially to the sea of applauding faces below, and then, interrupted, as had been his predecessors, by many a word or witticism that at first roused many a burst of laughter, Ned Burnham, erstwhile of Columbia, began to speak. From where Rex Ingraham stood his preliminary words were inaudible, and curiously the soldier drew near. He was on the west,—the Nassau street side, and the speaker was facing south. Something in Ingraham's sun-tanned, soldierly face, and the service-worn uniform and sabre caught the eyes of those nearest him, and they readily made way for him that he might

better see and hear. In this manner he gradually worked on until in the dense throng he had nearly reached the Wall street crossing, and there in a second story window—Watson’s first window on the south side of the street—he could see three or four faces,—two, he thought, of women. The other window was filled also, so was that of the little consultation room, so were hundreds more along the busiest street in Gotham, though this was long after business hours. By this time Rex began to note that all jocular comment or half mischievous cheer had ceased. The vast throng was beginning to give attention and respectful ear,—beginning actually to listen. Every now and then there would come a murmur of genuine feeling, a little burst of half reluctant applause, and still Rex could not catch the words. Working farther into the throng upon the pavement, every now and then a word, a phrase, or some brief sentence would come echoing back from the massive walls across the way, and oddly familiar they began to sound. Full five minutes now had Burnham been speaking, and, in manifest wonderment, indeed in admiration, men were beginning to applaud in vehement earnest, but Ingraham stood there spellbound. Two minutes more and, though he could hear only occasional lines, he needed not to hear at all, for, word for word, line for line, space by space he could tell just what was coming,—could even anticipate the punctuating burst of applause, and felt himself quite carried away in the glow and enthusiasm of a brilliant peroration that finally lifted Wall street off its feet and set it wild with frantic and tumultuous cheering.

In the midst of this the blushing orator was seized and shouldered and chaired down the massive steps, and borne away through an exulting multitude to be fêted and toasted and cheered again at "Del's" downtown resort, now crammed to suffocation, while the man who wrote and first delivered that thrilling speech, with swimming head and tingling ears, forced a passage through surging, shouting throngs until he reached the opposite side of the street and found himself breathless and bewildered, accosted by name. A lad of sixteen squeezed to his side, and piped: "Captain Ingraham, Mr. Watson says come up to his office."

It took some minutes of struggle to reach the stairway, but at last he made it; paused a while for breath; then, with his sabre clanking at his side, climbed the narrow flight and stopped short at the open doorway of Watson's front office. Half a dozen men of various ages and, possibly, professions were there, and all turned to look—even John Raynor, seated in a reclining chair and smiling vacuously. Watson himself came eagerly forward, with extended hands, but Ingraham stood like one in a daze, for there, in the middle of the room, leaning on the huge, book-littered table, facing him, with eyes filled with wordless dread and eagerness, pleading and welcome all intermingled, with her lips parted, her color swiftly coming and going,—there stood Editha Raynor, the girl to whom he had given his first, his heart-whole love.

"Old friends, who are rejoiced to see you, Captain Ingraham, and many a new one eager to meet you," cried

Watson, heartily, one hand upon the shoulder, the other grasping the gloved and unresponsive member that failed to meet the cordial pressure. The man that rode straight as a lance and charged home on the Palmetto line at Gaines's Mill and into the mass of Stuart's Horse at Gettysburg, seemed stricken dumb and nerveless now. He felt himself being dragged into the dimly lighted room, vaguely hearing the names of Watson's friends, and bowing and being shaken by the hand,—even of being led to and bending dizzily, awkwardly before Editha Raynor, whose eyelids now were drooping, whose little hand, gloved and fluttering, rested only an instant in his. But then, led past the spot where she stood powerless to move, Ingraham found himself facing the calm, self-poised, self-confident society leader, schooled in many a social tilt, skilled in the science of dissimulation—the smiling, stylish, admirably gowned and garnished woman whose cold-blooded letter to John Winn had rankled two long years in his, Rex Ingraham's, heart. “Our hero, and looking every inch the part!” said she, with unflinching eyes and imperturbable grace, with even a ring of cordiality, sincerity in her stilted words. And now at last, as in the presence of the enemy, the spirit of fight, the thought of his wrongs, the sight of her insolent, impudent, indomitable ease surged up and overwhelmed every tenet of his caste. The pallor of fatigue, of all too recent wounds, of deep emotion, fled from his face before the flush of indignation and contempt that swept instantly to his very temples; his eyes fairly blazed in the brief instant that he

looked upon her, then, with a mere inclination of the head, without a word, without seeing, apparently, the gracious hand extended in greeting, turned and took that of John Raynor, limp and tremulous, and bent over him in solicitude, at once reassuring and affectionate. Raynor himself could speak only with difficulty, but his eyes were filled with inexpressible yearning, with doubt and question, with grief and rejoicing all combined. His feeble hand clung to Ingraham with all its little strength. His lips seemed trying to frame words of welcome and inquiry. Watson had noted,—had infallibly noted—the brief but most expressive scene between Mrs. Fairbanks and the soldier, and was swiftly drawing his conclusions. Other men present saw only her unconquerable smile, for Ingraham's back was toward them, and they attributed the brevity of that interview to Raynor's impatience and to Ingraham's sympathy for the stricken man. They found means, most of them, to slip out presently, "Going to congratulate Burnham," said one. "Couldn't hear a word he said—too far away and too much noise, but the effect was tremendous!" But some had heard, at least partially, and were sitting dazed, while Ingraham, from the moment he reached John Raynor's side, had speech only for him; only a courteous bow for those who took their leave; only a hurried word for Watson; not so much as another glance for the women, one of whom,—the younger,—presently moved slowly, noiselessly into the adjoining room and thither Mrs. Fairbanks followed.

"There are papers here that *had* to be attended to this

afternoon,” Watson was saying, as the lawyer reëntered. “ Danger was over in this part of the town, so they drove here from the Astor to see the meeting. Burnham’s speech was a triumph, I should judge,” and Watson was keenly studying Ingraham as he spoke. “ They told me he was getting to be quite a talker on ’change, but I hadn’t heard of him as an orator. He’ll be here presently,” was the significant close, for Mrs. Fairbanks had passed to the hallway and was speaking to the office boy. As she again returned,—Raynor the while still clinging to Rex’s hand and babbling slowly, painfully into his ear,—Watson stepped quickly to the door. “ James,” he cried, “ take this telegram.” The boy came up the matting-covered stair again. Mrs. Fairbanks had passed once more into the rear room where she had left her niece and where she could not hear what now passed between the lawyer and the lad. Ingraham, seated half facing the hallway, could not well avoid it.

“ You were taking a note to Mr. Burnham,” said Watson. “ I will add a postscript. Go with this telegram first, then post these at the office. There’s no hurry.” Letters were handed the boy in exchange for the pencilled note that Watson was now carefully tucking in a waistcoat pocket. “ I see by the papers,” said he, calmly resuming his seat close to Raynor’s chair, “ that your friend Chalmers is with you on the staff of General Brown. Er—could you two dine with me at the Astor this evening? ”

“ I fear not, Mr. Watson,” answered Ingraham, surprised at such a proposition, at such a time from a man

presumably level headed. "I should be back at headquarters even now."

"So I feared," said Watson, slowly, reflectively, "yet I have just taken the liberty of wiring General Brown, over the police telegraph, that very important personal considerations require your presence here as much as thirty minutes. Half an hour ago there was no trouble south of Houston street. Take our carriage. The general left police headquarters a while ago and is now at the City Hall. Get Chalmers and come back here quick as you possibly can."

There was that in Watson's face that told far more than his words. Raynor gazed in helpless bewilderment. Ingraham rose at once. "You mean——" he began.

"I mean that you have not a second to spare. You placed this matter in my hands a year or more ago, and now or never is the time to clinch it. Go, man, and bring Hugh Chalmers."

Less than thirty minutes later these two strangely allied men, Southern and Northern—one in cool civilian garb, the other in trim uniform, stood within the lawyer's office, the Virginian with grave and courtly dignity bowing to the two ladies, who were once more seated near the invalid;—then, with compassionate and kindly interest, addressing himself to Raynor, whose pathetic eyes flitted from one to another in the little group, now reinforced by two men, a junior partner and a clerk who had been of the party at Ingraham's first appearance.

The very atmosphere had changed and now seemed sur-

charged with electricity. Mrs. Fairbanks had lost every symptom of that superiority of manner that so distinguished her. She had suddenly become fitful and nervous. Much of her brilliant color was still in evidence, but there was a dreadful pallor about the mouth, a hunted look about the eyes, and they were furtively following Watson's every move—Watson who had drawn Rex Ingraham into the little consultation room adjoining the front office, and, though intently listening to every footfall on the stairs and displaying unwonted sign of excitement, was struggling to maintain his preternatural placidity of manner, even while murmuring such words as this:—

“Nothing on earth, Ingraham, was ever more fortuitous. I might have had to wait a year for this chance. Now Burnham's got to walk straight into the trap. These papers concern him as much as any one else. Why, between those two they had about mesmerized that girl.”

“I don't—understand,” said Ingraham.

“You *don't*! She was to have married him months ago, in Havana. By the book, he's coming now! Stay here!”

The step upon the stairs was quick, yet not too springy. Mrs. Fairbanks, rising quickly to her feet, started to the door, but Watson led. “You're late, young man,” they heard him say. “Five minutes more and these good people would have gone and left you.”

“Couldn't help it! Crowd just *wouldn't* let me go. Hear my speech?” The voice was exultant though the utterance was thick. Chalmers, informed by Ingraham of

what had happened and knowing what to expect, studiously kept his back to the door and strove to continue conversation with Raynor; but in the elder woman's face Ned Burnham, clouded though were his eyes, sighted danger and disaster. Instantly his manner seemed to change. He half recoiled, but Watson had his hand; drew him swiftly within; the door was shut and locked behind him; the clerk stood, back against it, shoving the key in his pocket.

"What's up?" said Burnham; then turned sickly gray as Ingraham stepped forward into the room; then strove to rally and with an awful smile, held forth a faltering hand. "Rex, old boy! Why, I'd know you anywhere—even in a beard!" he stuttered.

"You *have* a most retentive memory, Burnham. I heard you speak," was the answer, but the gloved hand went back, not out to get the swaying form. Editha Raynor sat gazing upon them one miserable moment, then her proud head drooped, her pallid face was hidden in her arms. Even when a moment later Chalmers turned and spoke, she could not raise them from the table.

"I called you a cur and a liar, Mr. Burnham, in Havana," Hugh Chalmers was saying, in his measured tones. "Now I repeat it here, and stand ready to prove my words."

"Add plagiarist, Burnham, and false friend," said Ingraham, quietly, though quivering from head to foot, "and I am with Major Chalmers."

"You—you—ruffians!" began the cornered wretch. "You shall pay——" but he was impotently backing



"THE GLOVED HAND WENT BACK, NOT OUT TO GET THE SWAYING
FORM"

toward the door as he so truculently spoke, and brought up on the toes of the obstructive clerk.

“And all that’s but a minor matter, Burnham,” and now it was Watson’s voice again, while Raynor sat mumbling and staring, and then, with wild alarm and misery in her eyes, Editha lifted up her head and, seeing her father’s ashen face, sprang up to his side, too late, however to stay the lawyer’s words. “*I say you’re a thief and a scoundrel—and here’s your—*”

But there came a cry of anguish from Editha’s lips. No one noticed for the moment Mrs. Fairbanks who rushed frantically into the rear office, possibly for help or water. All save Burnham sprang to Raynor’s chair. The old man’s eyes were fixed on vacancy; his head had fallen until caught by Editha’s supporting arm. “Run for the doctor—from Hegeman’s,” ordered Watson, the beads starting on his forehead. “Take the carriage, then drive like sin for Dr. Tracy.” The door was flung open. The clerk sped down to the street, but the carriage was already spinning into Broadway. “Lady took it,” said a newsboy. “Most knocked me over. Told coachy to go to the Astor House, quick!”

For three days there had been few charges booked at police headquarters, other than that of rioting, but with night and the name of Burnham the column of ditto marks came to a stop.

CHAPTER XXIV

REVELATIONS

SUNDAY again, and while many a pulpit looked on empty pews, those of the Church of Rome preached to crowding congregations, and the priesthood rose to its opportunity and denounced the riots and rioters. The great city was still shuddering over the horrors of the week, for valued officers and men, military or municipal police, had suffered painful death or brutal injury at the hands of the mob, whose loss of over a thousand slain, and thousands wounded, had been no loss whatever to the community. The leading spirits knew the end was nigh when, in the gray of Wednesday's dawn and the gray of the Seventh's jackets, the earliest returning exponents of law and order were landed at Canal street and sent straightway in search of the murderous gangs,—something that, for a few hours at least, it was not hard to find. Two more regiments came within the day, a dozen more within the week, and there were many funerals on Sunday—many more, probably, than were ever officially reported.

A solemn little assemblage filed from the gothic vestibule of Grace that mid summer afternoon. A black-plumed hearse moved slowly down Broadway, followed by

only half a dozen carriages. A weeping girl, slender and graceful, heavily veiled and in deepest mourning, leaned upon the arm of a tall young officer in the uniform of the cavalry. Half a dozen sympathetic women, middle-aged and young, were of the mournful party. Watson, the gray-faced lawyer, held brief converse with Brown, the portly sexton, and stepped with Dr. Tracy into one of the rearmost carriages. Beside the pall bearers and four or five club and business associates of John Raynor, there were few men to ride with all that was mortal to its last resting place at Greenwood. Beside two devoted girl friends of Editha, who had come hastening to her from the sea shore, and not more than two or three elders, "there was dearth of woman's tears," for the deceased had few following kindred—as is apt to be the case with those bereft of most of the world's goods before being shorn of all. In point of fact, the nearest to Editha in point of kinship was Mrs. Fairbanks, by this time farthest away. "Too much prostrated to attend," said the sexton, with unflinching mendacity, to the few inquirers, who nodded appropriately but said not what they thought. At the grave Miss Raynor's grief and agitation were intense. God knows her desolation seemed complete. Her gentle friends were both alarmed and distressed. Tracy tried to lead her away, but she would not go. Even Watson's grim features twitched in sympathy, and presently Ingraham, to whose arm she had been convulsively clinging, took her clasped hands in his left, released that arm and, deliberately enfolding her trembling form, held and sus-

tained her to the last; led her finally away and almost lifted her into the waiting carriage where Kate Satterlee again received her and drew her to a loyal heart. It was nightfall when they reached upper Fifth Avenue again, and there, with the Satterlee's, Editha was to find temporary asylum until they could take her to the mountains or the sea shore, and there, two days later they read to her the news that the Secretary of War had asked for the names of the officers who had most distinguished themselves in the suppression of the fearful riots—that Captains Putnam of the regulars and Ingraham of the volunteers had been the first designated; that the latter was ordered to report in person to the Secretary without unnecessary delay. She started from the sofa where all the long day she had been lying, and with nervous hands began to pen a note, when her hostess entered with the simple announcement that Captain Ingraham had just called to inquire for her, to leave these few flowers and to say good-bye.

The running pantry boy caught him on the square below, and obediently Ingraham turned back. They led him to the library and found means to leave within the moment, and for the first time since that wonderful night at the old home—the night of his first farewell to her—the night that he had clasped her, fond, trembling, amazed yet radiant, unrebuking, nay, unresisting; had kissed her again and again even upon her sweet, warm lips. And now—ah, God, how changed! she stood there, pallid, wan and wistful, humbled and chastened through many a trial

and bitter sorrow. Tears she now had none left to shed. The fount had almost run dry. But there was such piteous quiver about the sweet, sensitive lips,—such utter desolation in the once joyous eyes,—such droop and pathos and humility in the pose of her slender form, garbed in its somber black,—such timid appeal in the little white hands held forth to him, that his heart almost burst in its wild bounding as he took those hands and, striving hard for self control, raised them one second to his lips. And then, brokenly she spoke:

“Rex, I—could not let you go without—thanking you for all you have been—for all you have done. I couldn’t let you go without telling you—my eyes were opened—months ago; without begging you—to try—to try to—forgive me.”

She had nerved herself to the effort. She had striven hard for strength and self control, but now it was said, it was over, and with it strength and will seemed ebbing, too. She felt herself going, and, blindly turning, tore her hands from his trembling grasp and, burying her face in her arms, sank upon the sofa, great sobs now shaking her lissome form.

And then, with Alice Langdon’s latest letter yet unread, bounding over his heart, Rex Ingraham threw himself upon his knees before her, seized and drew to him one little hand; covered it with passionate kisses; then sprang to his feet and, without another look or word, with almost a groan upon his lips, turned and strode resolutely from the room.

Wednesday morning he was at the War Department, had amazed its officials by declining the berth of assistant adjutant general with the rank of major, and had asked for orders to go to his troop at once. Such orders were seldom refused, but Stanton still had need of him. He wished to hear more of Chalmers, and it was evening before Ingraham could go to Brookside. He wished it might be another week.

His letters had told Alice Langdon of the urgent summons to New York. He had written hurriedly, late that previous and eventful Wednesday, to tell her of the final collapse of the plot against him, of Burnham's arrest, of the flight of Mrs. Fairbanks, of Mr. Raynor's seizure. He had written Friday evening that the seizure had proved fatal and that he should attend the funeral on Sunday. He had written Sunday night to say that he should be in Washington Wednesday, and now it was after sundown and duty was pointing the way.

She met him gently, sweetly, but her fair face was very pale and the soft eyes were heavy. Mother, she explained, had not been feeling strong of late and had retired early. Agatha, too, had come to greet him, and her eyes had a story to tell. She knew that he had been with Chalmers. It was but a little time before they were alone. He could have begged Agatha to stay, but she had to return, she said, to her mother's side. He went with her to the stairway and sent affectionate and sympathetic messages and lingered over his good-night.

But Alice was still standing when he returned. In her

hand was an open letter with "War Department" stamped upon the upper lefthand corner. In silence he drew near. He had asked himself what should be his greeting as soon as they were left alone, and he had answered for his heart "with outstretched arms." But the arms hung useless. Her face was averted; her whole attitude spoke unerringly of grief that he was powerless to banish.

But not one vestige of reproach could he detect in look, tone or word when presently she lifted her head and turned quietly toward him:—

"Rex, Colonel Townsend writes mother that you declined promotion and duty in Washington. I do not ask you why. Any girl would know. You have seen—*her* again, and you know now—what I began to know long weeks ago—that you have loved her—all the time." Then, with such a piteous little ghost of a smile, such a brave, brave effort to be womanful and controlled:—"You have tried so hard, Rex, to make me happy—to make me believe——"

And then it was he that broke down.

Late that night he sat in his stifling little room at Willard's, his head bowed upon his arms. There on the table lay two packets of letters—his own returned to him that evening, and hers, thrice his in number and volume, to be returned to her upon the morrow. Between them and beneath his arms lay, blurred and blotted pages—her valedictory. God alone knew with what bitter sorrow, what chastened, humbled, self-condemning heart he had read

that simple outpouring of girlish love, grief and forgiveness. In the sight of her gentle, uncomplaining, unaccusing sorrow he had seized her hand and thrown himself upon his knees, calling heaven to witness that he honored her above all women, that he loved her, yes *loved* her, tenderly and truly, that he would not accept his dismissal, that he would banish every thought of any other and be to her and her alone loyal, faithful and devoted. But she knew, and when he left her, late, he knew it was for good and all.

Then came the squadron and the field again. But soon there was nothing doing on the Rappahannock. There was disruption and dismay at home. Watson's temper, never the sweetest, had been sore tried. All his long, patient, plodding work seemed thrown away, for in the face of an unimpeachable chain of evidence, forged link by link and month by month by Watson's tireless hand, Ned Burnham had "jumped his bail" and got away, leaving more than one broker brother in the lurch and little Rosie desolate.

That man's buoyant mien, coupled with persuasive powers, personal magnetism or whatsoever psychic scientists may call it, had carried him through a checkered path of alternating crime and conquest almost to the realm of final victory. John Raynor had listened to his tales and trusted him. Editha Raynor, in spite of her better self, had turned against her hero and her lover; had almost turned to *him*. Keen men of affairs, impressed by his show of funds and the luck that attended his earlier ventures, had backed

him to the brink of disaster. Rosie Malloy, twice duped and deserted, had listened to her tempter and lied for him again—even against the friend of both,—and finally Agnes Fairbanks, proud woman of the world—dazzled by the results of the first timid essay she had made at his suggestion, risked her few thousands in hopes of fabulous gain; then, stunned by his story of unlooked for disaster, and assured that the one safe means of recovery was to meet the margins, twice took to him the key of her brother's safe. It was only marvelous that he had not stolen more.

That done, however, as in her poverty and ruin and broken health, she owed to Watson and to Editha, she was in his power. There had been a temporary turn in the tide that put in funds these strangely assorted partners in crime. Burnham's aim was the winning of Editha and her modest fortune, and Mrs. Fairbanks had sealed her pledge to aid in this. Burnham was at times abroad with them, at times at home in Wall street. He had become bold and over confident. He had failed to hoodwink Watson, who unearthed some of the Wall street transactions, and, believing Editha's appeals for money were inspired by the pair, saw fit, as her legal adviser, to warn her against Burnham as a business man, and then when Rosie and her people came to him with their queries, easily wormed from them the whole story, and saw the depth of Burnham's treachery. One link led on to another,—one warning to another and graver. Editha had begun to know before ever they reached Havana that her growing aversion was deserved. Then came the episode of Chalm-

ers's public accusation and affront ; then the home coming, the riots of July, the speech he never dreamed that she would either hear or hear of,—the speech whose manuscript he claimed to have lost or left Commencement Day at the Academy. At that time jealousy alone was the inspiration of the deed:—he could block its proposed publication. Later he saw that it was such an eloquent, stirring, patriotic thing to have at his tongue's end, and he memorized so easily, why not use it? He did, and it was the last pound of evidence she needed. Then came her wronged and knightly lover, her hero in spite of all. Watson's dramatic exposure followed, and then the bitter blow in her father's fall. Yet, even in her bereavement and desolation, she knew that Rex Ingraham's abrupt departure, without a word and at such a time, meant that there was now a gulf between them that might exist forever. Well, she deserved it.

Carden, coming back to the army in the winter had much to tell. He had seen Miss Raynor, he said, and she seemed changed and older and very sad. She was living quietly with the Satterlees at Tarrytown, to be near Mrs. Fairbanks, "who was in a sanitarium of some kind." Watson was looking out for them. Burnham had been writing begging letters from Montreal, but "the street" and the class had dropped him. Kent and Tracy were with the regular division. He didn't see much of them. He was now major and A. I. G. at corps headquarters, for the health of his own general had broken down early this third winter of the war, and he had been sent on diplo-

matic duty abroad. Chalmers had gone with him, Carden, to see the general off. Quite a friendship had sprung up, it seems, said Carden, growing out of the correspondence that ensued after the desk and miniature had been restored to the major. Carden had been to Brookside, and Dallas had returned from New Orleans, on leave, because of his sister's infirm health. "That fool Frenier" had been exchanged and was recaptured within a month, mixed up again in some way with "that blackguard Blunt," and now Stanton was making it hot for Frenier, and the Langdons were much worried—much more so than Frenier himself who never seemed to realize what a miscellaneous kind of an ass he was. Frenier's one topic of talk, said Carden, never noticing Ingraham's sombre eyes, was Alice Langdon, and her coldness to him who adored her. Frenier said he had found Chalmers in Washington; that he knew that Chalmers and Agatha had been devoted lovers; then had become estranged, and that Alice was unhappy because of her sister's sorrow. A brilliant idea occurred to him. He would bring Chalmers to Brookside. There would be reconciliation, bliss. *He* would appear as the good angel. Alice would then, in access of gratitude and joy, reward him, her adoring Edouard. He demanded of Chalmers that he go with him to Brookside next evening, where Agatha would meet him. Agatha would pine then no longer. She so craved to see him. Chalmers was incredulous, but Frenier insisted. Chalmers did not know of Frenier's being suspected as a spy. Frenier led him, first, to the barn,—whence they es-

caped just in time to avoid Winn—then, by a rear stairway, to the upper floor. Then he had managed, to her utter dismay, to inform Alice of what he had done, but before he could see Agatha there came the provost marshal and the soldiers. He had then been hidden in a pantry in the wing where, after Chalmers's fearful leap, he nearly revealed everything by tossing his handkerchief to the bleeding soldier. He was always doing, he said, Quixotic things. Yet Frenier had escaped without a scratch, while Chalmers, deluded and innocent, striving to flee rather than bring the inmates of Brookside to shame or suspicion, had suffered for him.

"Didn't the fool know Chalmers's wife had come to life again?" asked Rex, gloomily.

"Never dreamed of it," said Carden. "He was never, even before that episode, in Chalmers's confidence."

So that was the explanation of Chalmers's ill-starred visit and of Alice's fainting dead away. Chalmers had never felt that he could defend the one: Ingraham had never felt that he could speak of the other.

But there was something yet unexplained. Why had Chalmers written to Alice and, through her, restored the few treasures? Not for long was that told.

Again the cavalry rode breast deep through the foaming fords and took the old way into the Wilderness. Again the long blue columns filed through the forest and again Rex Ingraham drew rein at Burton's doorway, while the crash of Warren's volleys woke the echoes and almost drowned the yell of Longstreet's men. Again, with Bur-

ton this time, he explored the fields about Dowdall's and Luckett's, searching now among the hundred graves for that of brave John Winn, but could find no trace. Then, with Sheridan, Rex swung free of the plodding infantry and fought hard at Yellow Tavern. He was a major when they crossed the James, commanding six seasoned "troops" and scorning duty at the desk. Then came the Fall of '64, Sheridan's transfer to the Shenandoah, and a most unlooked for step. A regiment of cavalry had lost its head—and good name. It wasn't the fault of line officers or men. The Governor of the State asked Sheridan to name a young and energetic soldier, experienced in handling volunteers, and the name given was that of Ingraham. The silver leaves were on his shoulders when he charged at Winchester. The silver eagles came as the result of Waynesboro. Then back they rode with the earliest spring, again to the James, and then followed Five Forks. At the head of a gallant but depleted regiment, Ingraham charged with Merritt over the southward works and got the last shot of his eventful service—a bullet through the sabre arm that sent him, with other wounded, back to City Point and finally to Washington, where, first man to greet him, came Hugh Chalmers, radiant and looking ten years younger, and the bearded officer, limping slowly after him, looking gray and wan and maybe ten years older, was brave John Winn.

There was little left for Carden to tell when he, too, appeared on the morrow. As long as the doctors would allow, the two had sat with Ingraham, and Winn's story

was not a short one. They had indeed prepared to bury him after Chancellorsville, but a Southern surgeon found a spark of life still left and nursed it to a flame. Long months he lay in a field hospital, conscious of very little. Then came partial recovery; then a year in prison; then semi starvation; then the guns of Grant. He was alive, thank God, and the surgeons said that now he might soon be well.

"You, too, Rex," said Chalmers, lingering a moment after Winn had left the tent, "but nursing is what you need, and Dallas—and all—say we must have you at Brookside."

It took Carden to explain that. "It's a foregone conclusion," said he, "though no engagement has been announced, but he's out there every day. Oh, hadn't you heard? Why, of course! Well, you know our General went to Italy. You remember what he said about the face in the miniature. He knew her the instant he set eyes on her, driving on the Pincian, and confounded her by calling her by her right name when she came, demanding aid. She had lost most of her beauty and health. With them went her charm and—friends—and means except what Chalmers sent her. She went into hospital, so the General wrote, in March a year ago. She has been dead over a year."

Then some hearts, at least, had found happiness. Rex saw it in the two faces that beamed upon him later that second day. He grasped their hands and wished them joy

unutterable, and later asked for Alice, who—"could not leave mother," said Agatha, with downcast eyes.

But he would not go to Brookside. He *could* not. As soon as law would let him, with brave John Winn, he was going home.

One exquisite evening in early June, Ingraham found himself slowly climbing a winding pathway among the wooded heights overlooking from the east the glorious view of Tappan Zee, the rock-ribbed palisades, the beautifully rolling hill country of the opposite and northward shores. In the soft hues of the twilight, and the hush that had fallen with the close of the day, moving forms were somewhat dim, while every sound was sharper, clearer, and the snap of a twig in the dusky aisle among the cedars, caught the ear of a listening and expectant girl many seconds before she could even faintly see the cause. They had met twice, Editha and Ingraham, in the city. Watson had need of them both in the conduct of her affairs. She had now been mistress of her own fortune for over a year, and her first act was to pay off every claim that had been filed against her father's estate, and some that had not been filed at all. Chalmers had been of material aid. Poor Frenier—"Frenzy," as his soldier guardians had come to call him, had long since parted with his papers, and they had perished with Blunt when that impartial patriot, the man who would serve both sides, strove to swim the Rio Grande, seeking refuge at Matamoras. Even "Frenzy" had not been overlooked in Miss Raynor's benevolence, for through him the mystery of the assault and

robbery of Rex Ingraham in Waverly Place, had been partially cleared. There at least was one thing, of which Burnham had been accused of having guilty knowledge, and of which he was innocent. Blunt bragged of it to Frenier during their brief and final association. It was he whom Rex had seen at the New York Hotel, he who quickly planned and carried out the crime. Watson would have laid it at Burnham's door, but failed.

On the occasion of the two visits referred to, Editha's business affairs completed for the day, Ingraham had escorted her to the evening boat. On neither, however, had there been the faintest reference to the manner of their parting when he, that last time, had returned to the front. And now another parting was probable. He had not yet been mustered out. His regiment was with Custer marching on the Rio Grande. There was talk of trouble with France, whose soldiery in numbers had invaded Mexico. There was still need of men. In answer to inquiries from Washington as to whether he could be ready for duty with another month, he replied he would be ready with another day. Watson heard of it and told her.

"Rex," she wrote, "can you dine with us and spare me an hour to-morrow?" And he had answered that he would come up by the 7 o'clock and return by the 10.30 train. He would rather not dine with them. His arm bothered him a bit at times. He would come along the railway to the old path up the hill. He had known it well in the college days, and he would reach "the Cedars" by 8:15.

Yet he climbed that path with faltering feet. There had been no stain upon his knightly shield when, four years ago he had clasped her, yielding, in his arms and the vehement love within him spake in spite of himself; but now, though rank and honor had come to him with the war, there was no need to tell him what he had lost. The face of Alice Langdon, sweet, pathetic, sorrowing, yet never clouded by scorn or reproach, came before him night and day. He could not lay again before Editha that once unsullied name. She had begged *his* forgiveness for the wrong she had done him, and frankly owned her fault. Could he as frankly own his, and having owned it, could he look for love again?

This thought it was that had curbed his pen during two long years. This it was that had tied his tongue during the few tremulous meetings since his return. But now his sword was needed in a distant field. Sheridan himself had sought it. Now another parting was at hand. Now he might be looking for the last time on the face he so passionately loved. And so thinking as he issued from the arching cedars, he glanced up and saw her, smiling welcome at a little rustic arbor overlooking the Hudson.

The crescent moon, high over the dim range beyond the magnificent river, was just peering through the purpling skies. The soft evening breeze had died away. The leaves had even ceased to rustle. The last faint, drowsy twitter of the birds was stilled. He had not thought to see her until he reached the broad piazza of the mansion, where the lights were beginning to twinkle beyond the

sloping lawn. She must have come to meet him. She, too, like Alice, held a letter in her hand. She, too, like Alice, was pale and sorrowing, but the lovely face lighted with so sweet a smile as she turned to him, that the traces of grief and suffering vanished like dew before the sunshine.

"It was good of you to come, Rex. I feared you might be much hurried. Have you heard—yet?" There was just a little quiver about the lips, but the clear, brave eyes never flinched from his.

"Not yet," he answered, dropping reluctantly the soft, white hand. "They will probably give me a day or two."

"Shall we sit—here?" she asked, after a pause, and answered for herself by taking one end of the rustic sofa; the letter lying, with her hands, idly in her lap. He stood a moment, gazing upon her in wistful silence, for she made a lovely picture. She had thrown a light scarf of some flimsy, diaphanous web over her white shoulders. A creamy rosebud nestled in the corsage of her dinner gown. That bud and her mother's ring were the only ornaments she wore. Time was, in her radiant, queenly girlhood, when Miss Raynor was somewhat addicted to pearls, and looked forward to a time when she could consistently wear diamonds. Now, in her mature womanhood, she had forgotten both. Seeing that he did not sit she gave the signal that bears no other interpretation, and brooks no disregard,—the slight drawing to of the skirt as though to make more room,—there was already no lack; and now he lowered himself to the settee, half facing her, his left



"FOR A MOMENT NEITHER SPOKE"

arm along the sloping back, and for a moment neither spoke.

“Rex,” she presently began, with just a little start and shiver as though she felt that something must be done, “we haven’t too much time, as of course you will wish to see the family”—which fact he was not so sure of, nor was she. “I saw Mr. Watson yesterday, and now you are going back to your duties, though we thought the war was over; and there is something—I want you to do—for me—for me and for father. You know that my little inheritance proved much larger than had been supposed. You know that my first act has been to pay off every possible claim, but with my first thought, Rex, you—and what father hoped and intended for you—stood paramount. Mr. Watson tells me you refused to touch a dollar of what was rightfully yours. Four years’—salary—are due you, sir, besides the sum with which father had intended to complete your education in the law. The fact that you prefer the army does not deprive you of this that he always meant should be yours. Mr. Watson knows. Poor auntie knew it. *I* knew it. Ned Burnham knew it. Even his—allowance—is being paid him now; otherwise he would be deluging people with begging letters, or doing something worse. Mr. Watson says it would be useless for him to speak to you of this, so I am being my own business manager, Rex. That money is placed to your credit in—”

“I cannot take it, Editha,” he interrupted, at last. “I do not need it. My pay is sufficient and when the Volunteers are mustered out I shall be commissioned something

in the regulars. The army, not the law, is to be my profession."

"But listen, Rex," she answered, gently, her color faintly rising. "There are people you would like to aid, whom *I* would love to aid, but they would not take it coming from me, whereas you could put it in such a way they could not well refuse—people who have helped you, Rex, and suffered accordingly. That Virginian, Burton, whose home is gone—"

"*Was* gone, Editha. He is building another and better—Chalmers and I are helping."

"Major Chalmers," she repeated, reflectively, suggestively. "To what extent do you think he could or should help? His own fortune is so seriously impaired that—Rex, he does not dream I know this, but I have learned many things—he has been seeking to raise money for his marriage on property Mr. Watson says has depreciated in value as much as mine has increased. Think of him, a proud and sensitive Virginian, a soldier and a gentleman, poor in purse, actually exiled and ostracized by the state he loved, with Madame Frenier and his children to support, the old slaves and servants to aid, and now, deeply in love with a portionless girl, he is seeking to marry. He has only just learned the truth—that the security he offers is of little value. It *will* be of value, Watson says, if only he can hold it and develop it a few years. What did he *not* do for you, Rex?—and what has it not cost him?"

"I did not dream you knew of—all this, Editha," said Ingraham, inconsequently. Yet, there was the letter in

her lap, addressed in Chalmers's well-known hand. There was another missive underneath it, which he could only partially see.

"Nor does Major Chalmers dream I know—as to his *money* affairs," said Editha.

"He told you then of his—other affairs?—his engagement?" The man within him was beginning to wonder—and worry.

"Of *his* affairs, yes. Of others—he is not the man to talk. At least—that is—" She broke off suddenly in some confusion. Truth is so awkward a thing at such a time.

"Well? that is? at least—unless what?" persisted Ingraham, for now her face was averted. It was he who had become insistent.

"What I mean is that he wouldn't speak—until he saw I—knew." Then she whirled upon him suddenly. "Rex, did you think that after—that awful day in Wall street, I could be content to lose all track of you?" There were tears now welling up in her glorious eyes, and he saw them, yet persisted.

"Tell me—what he told you, Editha."

"He told me the whole story of his love for Agatha Langdon—of their separation and its cause; of Frenier and his mad folly. He told me the bitter words, she, Agatha, had used. Dr. Dallas and her mother made her believe, as they believed, that Chalmers had dishonorably won her love,—that he knew his wife was living all the time,—and in his grief and indignation he told her he never again would vex her by so much as a syllable, written or spoken,

until—or unless—she sent for him. Frenier, you know, made him believe she *had* sent. He had with him the proofs that she had wronged him, and two or three letters of hers, and a portrait, that he had retained only for a few days. These he had placed in one packet addressed to—her younger sister that she might restore them—that she might know he was innocent in case he never returned and Agatha repented of her words. You know the rest.”

“But what—else—did he tell?” asked Rex.

“He told me—nothing, Rex, until he saw I—knew.”

“And you have known——?”

“Ever since—the summer you went back to Washington, Rex. *She* wrote me late in August. We have been writing ever since. She is the sweetest, tenderest girl I ever knew.”

Slowly he arose from the bench and stepped forth into the starlight and stood there, sorrow-stricken, shame-stricken. The day was done. The story was told. She knew then what he had been; that not Chalmers, but he, had won, unworthily, the heart of a gentle and trusting girl; had pledged to that girl a love already given to another. A bat, circling, swooping about his head, dove close to the rustic entrance at his back, close to the sweet, winsome face just peering forth in search of him, and she uttered a little, half-strifled shriek at which he turned instantly. But now she was laughing at her own nervousness, only the laugh had so little of merriment. He would have turned away again, but she laid her hand, trembling

just a bit, upon his arm. "Shall I tell you what she said—*then*, Rex?"

He bowed his head. He would take his medicine, manfully.

"She said you not only could not tell—you could not act—a lie."

"Editha," he interrupted, impetuously, "it *isn't* so! I *did* lie to her. I told her I did—love her. Her face haunts me even now. I was false to her—I was false to—you."

"That was my fault, Rex," she said, very simply, and then, as he would not raise his head and look at her, she spoke again.

"You speak of her face, Rex. I know it is lovely; yet, you see it as it was, perhaps, in '63 and not—as it is to-day."

He turned upon her, surprise and question in his eyes.

"I told you what she said—then. Shall I tell you what she says—now?" And she took from her girdle the dainty little note he had but half seen. "Oh, by the way," she continued, just a bit mischievously, "do you not miss Colonel Winn?"

"Winn! Why, I've lost track of him for a week!" said he, dismayed at thought of his neglect.

"Alice hasn't," said Miss Raynor, dimpling. Then, half playfully, "Now, *there's* a soldier who stands by his guns and never gives up!"

"Do you mean—that Winn is there—at Brookside?" he asked, half in delight, half in doubt.

"So sayeth—this letter," replied Miss Raynor, pursing

up her pretty lips. Then, as he made no move save to drop his head again, gloomily staring at the glimmering lights far out upon the waters, she regarded him with deserved displeasure. He could not yet forgive himself, even though forgiven. It was getting late and marching orders might come with the morrow. There was little left to say, but there was much to be done, before she could let him go. The dew was thickening upon the turf about her dainty feet and though they might not come in search of her, would not some one soon be calling?

"Rex, it is damp—and I am fearful for your arm." Its sling had been discarded, but he had a way of thrusting the right hand into the breast of his coat,—a way that spoke of pain or weakness. "How is it—now?"

"Doing fairly well," he said. "It's lucky there's been no use for it since—since Appomattox."

He, a soldier, was thinking of one thing. She, a soldier's sweetheart, was thinking of quite another.

"No use, Rex?" she half murmured, the mobile lips twitching or quivering again, merriment or distress, mischief or pleading, which was it? How could he tell unless he looked upon her, but that he stood ashamed to do, so humbled was he in his own regard.

And then through the pulseless silence of the summer night there came floating on the air the soft notes of a piano. Some one at the house was beginning to play—some one in possibly sentimental vein, for of all the dreary ballads in vogue in the war days she had chosen the

dreariest—the forlorn old tune he had crooned to himself so often in that first year at the front:—

“I am dreaming, sadly dreaming,
“Of the love that once was mine.”

and in his present mood, more than half morbid and all unreasoning, he almost welcomed the mawkish chant. But Editha would none of it; neither would they at the house, for half a dozen laughing voices were raised in instant protest. The performer was brushed from her throne. A new hand struck the keys, and then, bold, stirring, spirited, with the clank of the sabre, the stamp of the hoof, the blare of the trumpet in every tone, quick burst the thrilling prelude; then, in a glorious baritone, followed the soldier lyric “The Song of the Guard,” and Ingraham’s drooping heart roused swift at the sound. She saw, and drawing closer, watched him and was still.

And with the second verse the dismal spell was broken, swept away.

“I drink the first glass, sword in hand,
“To him who for our fatherland——”

rang out the trooper war words, rich and full in volume, martial and defiant in tone, and all the soldier in him rallied at the call. Doubt, fear and shame were stilled on the instant as he turned and drank it in, and then both hands went out in fervent appeal:—

“Editha, then you know why I dared not speak. You know all, I think, except that—all the time I loved you.”

"That is what—Alice wrote," she whispered, her eyes brimming over, his heart throbbing hard, so near to his yet not—not close—for still he dare not. He stood clasping only her hands.

"And if I come back—safe?" he questioned, eagerly, yet not daring as that daring song, not daring as a soldier should.

"How can you go with—such an arm?" she murmured.

"It *isn't* good for much," he answered ruefully.

A moment's silence. He could not see her face. Another moment and the whispered, half whimsical question:—

"Is it good for—*anything*, Rex?"

And then the war song came to a close—and the soldier understood.

FINIS

LOW PRICED POPULAR EDITIONS OF THE
EARLIER

MILITARY NOVELS

OF

GEN. CHARLES KING

IN ENTIRELY NEW BINDINGS



LIST OF TITLES

FOUND IN THE PHILIPPINES

A GARRISON TANGLE

AN ARMY WIFE

NOBLE BLOOD

FORT FRAYNE

WARRIOR GAP

A WOUNDED NAME

TRUMPETER FRED



Retail Price, 50 Cents

FOR SALE EVERYWHERE OR SENT POSTPAID ON RECEIPT OF PRICE BY

THE HOBART COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

114 Fifth Avenue

NEW YORK CITY

A DAUGHTER *of the* SIOUX

By GENERAL CHARLES KING

A Tale of the Indian Frontier

Illustrations by Frederic Remington and Edwin Willard Deming

SOME PRESS NOTES

The Chicago Daily News

A stronger story than any he has written for many years.

The Philadelphia Item

A genuinely delightful tale, clean, wholesome, thoroughly enjoyable. . .

The Baltimore American

Is full of interest, and equals, if not surpasses, his best previous efforts.

The Portland (Me.) Press

This captivating novel is quite perfect of its kind and there is not one dull line from start to finish.

The Burlington Hawkeye

Is one of General King's best works and withal a most entertaining and fascinating story of army life.

The San Francisco Chronicle

The story is full of life and movement, and all the details of army life are described with that perfect knowledge which carries conviction to the reader.

The Cleveland Leader

It is the strongest and most entertaining story he has written for many a day. . . . It gets a grip on the reader in the first chapters and holds it to the end.

The World, New York City

A soldier's story told with a soldier's swing. . . . Is capably illustrated and has a particularly handsome and tasteful cover portrait of the heroine in colors.

The Pittsburg Leader

There is a naturalness about the story that makes it of decided interest, and every one who reads it will lay the book down with a feeling of regret that the end has been reached so soon.

The Minneapolis Tribune

Is the best piece of work General King has given his admiring public in a long time. Is full of incident and romance, and its central theme contains a dramatic power worthy of subject and author.

The Literary World

To General King we are deeply indebted for much information concerning family life at fort and trading post. In these days of the problem novel and the yellow journal, it is a mental pleasure and a moral profit to read of men who are in love with their own wives, of women who adore their own husbands.

PRICE, \$1.50

FOR SALE EVERYWHERE OR SENT POSTPAID ON RECEIPT OF PRICE BY

THE HOBART COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

114 Fifth Avenue

NEW YORK CITY

AN APACHE PRINCESS

By GENERAL CHARLES KING

A Tale of the Indian Frontier

Illustrations by Frederic Remington and Edwin Willard Deming

SOME PRESS NOTES

Chicago Daily News

There is not a dull page in the book, which is one of the best stories of action Gen. King has ever written.

The Evening Post, Louisville

It is better than most of King's later stories; it is more effective and holds the attention with a closer grasp.

The World, New York City

Has all the rapid action and thrill which an army of readers has been taught to expect in the General's storytelling.

The Inter-Ocean, Chicago

The materials are plenty for an exciting story, so complicated that it cannot by any possibility be cleared up till the very last page.

The Philadelphia Item

Contains fresh and interesting features which render it of paramount interest. . . . This latest book is his best, proving charming on every page.

New York Times

Inspires an overmastering desire to read ahead at a mad gallop—taking pages sometimes as a hunter does fences—and, if possible, catch the flying thread of events.

The Transcript, New York

Is one of the best novels General King has written and possesses the power of holding the reader's interest from the start to finish. It is handsomely illustrated by Remington and is a valuable addition to the fiction of the day.

Chicago Chronicle

Intrigues, peculiar complications, strong evidence and complete innocence alternate, so that a lively chase is continually kept up and the reader is puzzled to know how it is all coming out. Those who are familiar with the author's "A Daughter of the Sioux" will find in the latest work the same accurate portrayal of camp life, scouting parties, rough riders, spirited women and lively Indians.

PRICE, \$1.50

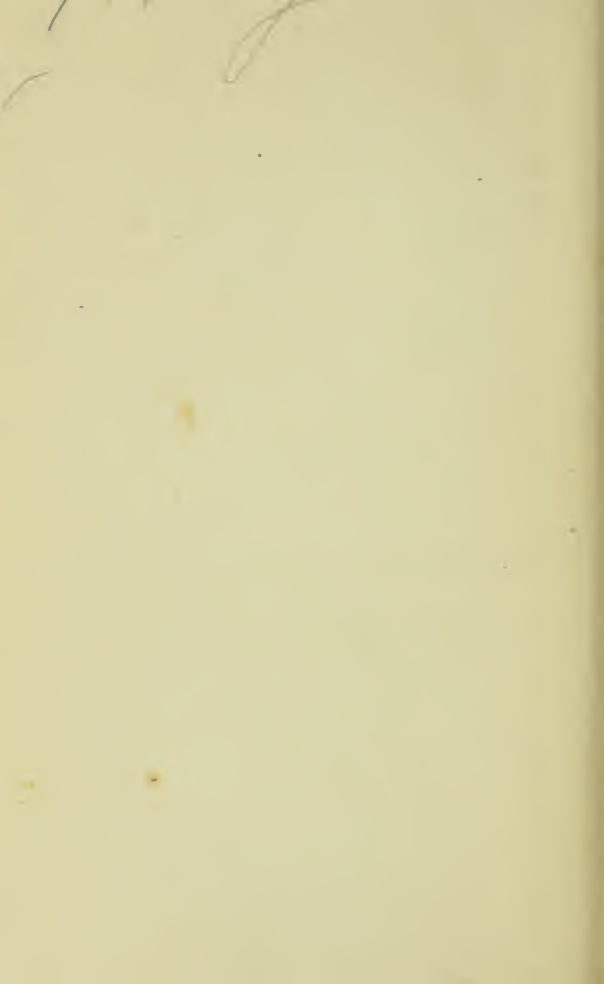
FOR SALE EVERYWHERE OR SENT POSTPAID ON RECEIPT OF PRICE BY

THE HOBART COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

114 Fifth Avenue

New York City





University of
Connecticut
Libraries
